THE

Best Match:

OR THE

Souls Espousal to Christ, opened and improved.

By *Edward Pearse.*

Joh.3.29,30. *He that hath the Bride, is the Bridegroom: but the Friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoyceth greatly because of the Bridegrooms voice; This my joy therefore is fulfilled.*
He must increase, but I must decrease.

LONDON,

Printed for *Jonathan Robinson*, at the Golden Lion in St. *Pauls* Church-Yard; and *Brabazon Aylmer*, at the 3 Pigeons in *Cornhil*, 1673.

THE

Bell Match:

OR THE

Souls Espousal to Christ,

opened and improved.

By Edward Fowler.

LONDON,

READER.

NExt to the full and immediate Vision and Fruition of the God of Glory above, the greatest happiness of Souls lies in Union and Communion with Christ here: Nor indeed can we ever attain unto the one without an acquaintance with the other. Now to bring thee into, and build thee up in this Union and Communion with Christ, and thereby to fit and dispose thee for that glorious Vision and Fruition Above, is the principal design of the ensuing Discourse. If thou requirest a reason of the publication hereof, I desire thee to satisfie thy self with this; God in his all-wise and holy Providence, hath seen good now for several months to call the unworthy Author out of his Vineyard, and lodge him in a sick Chamber, and he also seems to be speedily calling him out of this World, and to bring that Night upon him wherein no man can work, wherein nothing is to be done either

for God or a Man's Soul, John 9. 4. And being never like to do more for Christ on Earth, he was willing, in hopes of advancing his dear Lord's Kingdom, in the drawing of Sinners to him, and building up of Saints in him, & communion with him, to make these poor Contemplations publick. God was pleased some few years since to make a more than ordinary use of the preaching of them, many Souls being through his Grace espoused to Christ and more brought nearer to him thereby: and had I not some hopes that he would also, through that same Grace of his, make some use of the reading of them for thy good, and the good of others, I think they had never seen the light: Thy good then, and Christ's Glory in the enlargement of his Kingdom, is the thing aimed at herein, which the good Lord by his Grace accompliſh. I am lying daily by the brink of the Grave, waiting upon the Will, and for the Call of my Sovereign Lord; the only reason swaying with me to desire life, next to the more through working out of my own Salvation, is to reveal, and make known

Christ

Christ to Souls, and to publish the glad Tydings of Peace and Salvation to a lost and sinful World: But if God will make no further use of me that way, his Will be done. I comfort my self with what an holy Man speaks, *Sinless glorifying of God*, saith he, *is better than sinful glorifying of God.* His meaning I suppose is, that 'tis better to glorifie God in a sinless than in a sinful state: Truly here we sin in our best Actions; and if we bring a little glory to God, yet woe and alas! how much dishonour do we also bring him? and what iniquities do there cleave to our most holy things? But above we shall glorifie him without sinning; we shall love him, praise him, admire him, adore him, delight in him, and ascribe glory to him without the least taint or tincture of sin cleaving thereunto; having not only all tears wiped off our eyes, but which is infinitly, infinitly, infinitly better, all sin purged from our hearts and actions. Farewel, I leave thee and this poor Treatise to the Blessing of Heaven.

E. P.

To the Reader.

THere are two main ends for which the Gospel-Ministry is ordained; the one is, the winning of Souls, and bringing them into Christ; the other is the edification and building up of such as are already brought in. It hath pleased Christ, the Head of the Church, who distributeth Gifts in order to the salvation of men, unto whom, and in what measure he pleaseth, to furnish the Author of this Discourse, with good abilities as to both these Works. As to the first, the Lord had given him a peculiar Gift, to qualifie him above many, to Preach the Gospel for the winning of Souls; and the Grace of God in him did inflame his heart with ardent desires, and did excite great longings in him after the conversion of Souls; and he was pleased to crown his own Gifts and Grace in him with great success, many a Soul having been turned unto God by his Labours. And it having pleased God to cast the Author into a languishing Distemper for some months, whereby he was wholly taken off from his Work in Preaching, so great did the desire of doing good to Souls remain in him, and such were the yearnings of his Bowels towards them, that being not able to speak to them any longer out of the Pulpit, he could not satisfie himself, but he must needs speak to them in this small Tract, wherein his great Scope and principal Design is, to allure and

dram

draw Souls unto Christ. As to the Matter of the Treatise, *I need say little, it will sufficiently speak for it self; only thus much I may say.* Union *with Christ is the foundation of our Happiness. The Apostle telleth us, that* Christ Col. 1. 27. *in us is the* hope of Glory; *We cannot have any sure or sound title to eternal Life and Glory, but by Union with Christ; whoever are saved, are saved by being brought under Christ as their Head.* Ephes. 1. 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ; *that he might* bring them under one Head; *so* Zanchy *and others interpret the Greek word there used. The Son of God incarnate is the true Vine into which the Elect are implanted. There are but two* Roots *of Mankind, the* First *and the* Second Adam; *the* first Adam *is the Root of Sin and Death unto all that abide in him; the* second Adam *is the Root of Righteousness and Life unto all who are implanted into him. The scope of this Discourse, is to perswade men not to be content to abide in the Root upon which they naturally grow,* viz. *the Root of the* first Adam, *but to seek after a new Relation unto Christ the* second Adam. *The Arguments by which the Author presseth Souls to come to Christ, are most pathetical and strong; and as there is a Vein of Heavenly Affection which runneth through the whole body of the Discourse to allure such who are yet strangers to the Lord Jesus to fall in love with him, so there is much*

ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι; *Omnia ad eorum caput adducere & adjungere, seu, colligere omnia sub uno capite.*

solid

solid Matter interwoven, whereby those who are already called, and have attained to some acquaintance with Spiritual things, may receive farther advantage. It pleaseth the All-wise God to leave the Author at a great uncertainty as to Life; the Lord hath kept him in the Furnace long, but he hath chosen and refined him in it; and whether it be in this, or in the other World, that he shall please to bring him forth, they who have most intimate converse with him, are perswaded, he will come forth as Gold. *The Lord grant that the same presence of Divine Grace, which attended these Sermons in the Preaching of them, may accompany them in the Publication, that many more Souls may be enamoured and drawn to the love of that fairest of ten thousand, the Lord Jesus; that so knowing him, and adhering to him, they may be saved eternally by him, by whom all that have been, are, or shall be saved, are brought to Life and Glory: So prayes,*

The unworthiest of

Christ's Servants,

John Rowe.

The

The beſt Match:

OR,

The Souls Eſpouſal to Chriſt.

From 2 Cor. 11. 2. *I have eſpouſed you to one Husband, that I may preſent you a chaſt Virgin unto Chriſt.*

CHAP. I.

Wherein an Introduction is made into our intended Diſcourſe, the Foundation thereof laid, and the Matters to be inquired into in our procedure therein propoſed.

A New Covenant-relation to Chriſt, is certainly a concern of the greateſt weight, and higheſt importance to the Sons of Men of any in the World: 'tis what lies at the foundation of all true happineſs both in Time and Eternity; without it (as a Learned Divine hath well

* *A Christo si sejungamur, non sumus Christiani, sed cadavera tantum Christianorum.* Davenant.

observed) * *we are not Christians, we are only the carkasses of Christians*; nor may we expect any saving advantage by any thing that Christ hath either done or suffered for poor sinners: And this relation, of so much weight and importance to us, the Scripture represents under various Notions and Expressions to us: 'tis represented to us, sometimes under the notion of a *King and Subjects*; hence Christ is called *King of Saints*. Sometimes under the notion of a *Father and his Children*; hence he is called *the Everlasting Father*; and they are his own words unto God the Father: *Behold I, and the Children which thou hast given me.* Sometimes under the notion of *Head and Members*; hence Christ is said to be *the Head of the Body, the Church*: and on the other hand, Believers are said to be *the Body of Christ, and Members one of another.* And to mention no more; sometimes (as in my Text, and frequently elsewhere) 'tis represented to us under the notion of *Husband and Wife, Bridegroom and Bride, or the Souls espousal to Christ, as its one and only Husband*; and under this notion I shall (God assisting) speak a little of it, and but a little, no more than to make way for a practical Design I have in my eye, which is to woo and allure poor Souls into an espousal, or Marriage-Covenant with this Blessed Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That then which is before us to be treated of, is the Marriage or Espousal between Christ and Believers; and the better to make way

way hereunto, you may observe, that there is a three-fold Marriage, as relating to Christ and us.

1. There is the Personal Marriage, and that is between the Person of the Son of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, and our Nature: This *Calvin* calls, *Verbum Incarnatum*, the Incarnate Word; or, as the *Evangelist* expresses it, *the Word made Flesh*, John 1. 14. this we generally call the Hypostatical Union.

2. There is the Mystical Marriage; and that is between the Person of Christ, God-Man, and the Person of Believers, as Militant here on Earth; whole Christ, and the whole Believer being made one: this the *Apostle* calls, *A being joyned to the Lord, and being one Spirit with him*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. and this we usually call the Spiritual Union.

3. There is the Heavenly Marriage; and that is between Christ and the Church Triumphant above; which indeed is the consummation of the two former; and this I would call the Glorious Union: and what that is I can't tell, but do hope am going to see, —— In the first of these lies the foundation of all our happiness; by the second, we are brought into an initial participation of it; by the third, we are put into the full possession and enjoyment thereof for ever. Now 'tis neither the first, nor last, but second of these that the *Apostle* here speaks of, when he saith, *I have espoused you to one Husband, even to Christ*: Which ac-

cordingly I shall make the Subject of my ensuing Discourse; which, as also the sum of the Apostles intendment, you may take in this short Position, *viz.*

That there is a blessed Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers; or that Believers are married or espoused to Christ, as their only Husband.

I have espoused you, sayes the Apostle, *to one Husband*: not to many, but to one; and who is that? why Christ, God-man: So the next words declare, *I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chast Virgin to Christ.* The same is also held forth in other Scriptures, *John* 3. 29. *He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom*, saith *John Baptist* concerning Christ and his Church: And again, *Rev.* 21. 9. *Come hither*, sayes the Angel to *John, and I will shew thee the Bride, the Lambs Wife*: That is, the Church, which is the Wife and Spouse of Christ; but I forbear.

What this Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers is; as also how 'tis made up and accomplisht, are the principal things to be enquired into, for the clearing of what lies before us; which therefore I shall address my self unto.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Eſpouſal or Marriage-Relation between Chriſt and Believers opened, and the import thereof laid down in five things.

But what is this Eſpouſal or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers? The Apoſtle ſpeaking of it, calls it *a great Myſtery: This* (ſaith he) *is a great Myſtery; but I ſpeak concerning Chriſt, and his Church*, Epheſ. 5. 32. I ſpeak of that Spiritual Marriage that is between Chriſt and his People; which indeed is a great Myſtery, that is, an hidden ſecret Thing; a thing hid from humane reaſon, and not to be underſtood but by Divine Revelation, and the Light of the Holy Spirit. So far as we apprehend it, you may take this ſhort account in general of it: 'Tis that ſpiritual conjunction or relation that is between Chriſt and Believers, between the Perſon of Chriſt and the Perſon of Believers, ariſing from his inhabitation in them by his Spirit, and their cloſe with him by Faith. Much might be ſaid for the opening of this general Conclu-

Μυστήριον, ſignificat rem occultam, & per ſe arcanam, non ſimpliciter, ſed religioſam, quæ ab humana ratione abſcondita eſt, & non poteſt percipi ſine Revelatione Divinâ, & Spiritus Sancti lumine. Zanch. in locum.

tion; but I shall wave it, and give you the true nature of the thing, under consideration, more particularly, as carrying these five things in it, *viz.*

I. Free and cordial Donation.
II. Near and intimate Union.
III. Sweet and lasting Communion.
IV. Strong and ardent Affection.
V. Mutual rest and complacency for ever.

I. This Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, carries in it free and cordial Donation; a giving of themselves each to other. In Marriages or Espousals, the Parties give themselves each to other; the Husband gives himself unto the Wife, and the Wife, by way of return, gives her self unto the Husband; they consent to take each other in that relation, and accordingly do give up themselves each to other: So in this Spiritual Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and his People, there is a giving of themselves each to other; they consent to take each other, and accordingly do give up themselves each to other. —— Christ, on the one hand, gives himself unto the Soul: I will be thine, sayes he, to the Soul; thine to love thee; thine to save thee; thine to make thee happy in me, and with me: I, with all my Riches and Treasures, will be fully and for ever thine: *I will be for thee*; that is the language of his

Espousing

Eſpouſing Love unto the Soul, *Hoſ.* 3. 3. And oh how ſweet is this Language! What can Chriſt give to poor Souls like himſelf? In giving himſelf, he gives the beſt Gift that either Heaven or Earth affords: In giving himſelf, he gives Life, he gives Peace, he gives Grace, he gives Righteouſneſs, he gives the favour of God, he gives Heaven, he gives all. Oh ſweet Gift! — On the other hand, the Soul by way of return gives himſelf to Chriſt: I will be thine, ſayes the Soul to Chriſt, I will be for thee and not for another: Hence 'tis ſaid, *They gave themſelves to the Lord*, 2 Cor. 8. 5. they freely and willingly yeelded up themſelves to Chriſt, to be his, and his for ever; Sweet Jeſus, ſuch as I am, and have, I give to thee. I am a poor, a ſorry Gift (ſayes the Soul) infinitely unworthy of thine acceptance; my beſt is too bad, my All is too little for thee: but ſeeing 'tis thy pleaſure to call for, and accept of ſuch a Gift at my hands, I do with my whole Soul give up my Self, my Strength, my Time, my Talents, my All for ever to thee. And though, the truth is, this be a ſorry Gift, yet you little think, how pleaſing, how grateful it is to Chriſt, and what a value he puts upon it. You have the whole of this owned and aſſerted by the Spouſe, *Cant.* 2. 16. *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.*

II. This Eſpouſal or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers, carries in it

near and intimate union. In Marriage there is a very near union and conjunction between the Parties: As they give up themselves each to other, so they become one each with other; *They are no more twain, but one flesh*, Mat. 19. 6. So in this Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, there is a very near union and conjunction between them; they two are made one; and thus the Apostle sets forth the Marriage between Christ and them, Ephes. 5. 31, 32. *For this cause shall a man leave Father and Mother, and shall be joyned unto his Wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great Mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church*, that is, I speak of the Marriage-relation which is between Christ and the Church, which consists in union: Hence also Believers are said *to be joyned to the Lord, and to be one Spirit with him*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. So that espousing to Christ, and being joyned to Christ, are all one. The truth is, herein lies the very soul and substance of this Spiritual Marriage, *viz.* in a spiritual union between Christ and the Believer: though Christ and the Soul were two before; two, that were strangers each to other, yet in this Marriage or Espousal they become one, and so one, as that all the World can never make them two again, never dissolve this union. * By this usual, but of all others most pleasant Metaphor of a Bridegroom and Bride (as a learned

* *Sponsi & sponsæ usitatâ, at omnium jucundissimâ Metaphorâ, unio spiritualis inter Christum & Ecclesiam, piamque animam exprimitur.* Gl. ſ. Rhe. ſac.

learned Man hath obſerved) *is expreſſed and ſet forth the Spiritual Union that is between Chriſt and the Church, Chriſt and every Holy Soul.* And this Union is a full Union, an Union between the whole Perſon of Chriſt, and the whole Perſon of the Believer; the whole Perſon of Chriſt is united unto the Believer, and the whole Perſon of the Believer is united unto Chriſt. *Neither is our Soul alone* (ſaith a Learned Man) *joyned with the Soul of Chriſt alone; nor is our fleſh alone joyned with the fleſh of Chriſt alone; but the whole Perſon of every Believer is truly joyned with the whole Perſon of Chriſt.*

Neque anima noſtra ſola cum ſolâ Chriſti animâ, neque caro noſtra ſola cum ſolâ Chriſti carne, ſed tota cujuſque fidelis perſona cum totâ Chriſti perſonâ conjungitur. Zanch.

1. On the one hand, the whole Perſon of Chriſt is united to the Believer; the Believers union with Chriſt, is neither with the Divine nor Humane Nature conſidered apart; but it is with the whole Perſon conſiſting of both Natures; and indeed, elſe they could not be ſaid to be united to [Chriſt], for neither of the Natures, conſidered apart, is Chriſt: We cannot ſay, that the Divine Nature is Chriſt, or that the Humane Nature is Chriſt; but Chriſt is both the Divine and Humane Nature, God-man, in one Perſon. *Chriſt* (ſaith a Learned Man) *is not a Name of either Nature, but of the Perſon conſiſting of both Natures, together with his Office.* Beſides, were we united only to one Nature, and not to the whole Perſon of Chriſt,

Buchan. Inſtitut. Theol. loc. 2

Christ, what would our Union avail us? Surely it would be vain and ineffectual. Were we united to the Humane Nature only, and not to the Divine, then to be sure our Union must be ineffectual; For Christ himself tells us, *That it is the Spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing*, John 6. 63. That is, (as judicious Interpreters expound it) the flesh or Humane Nature of Christ considered alone, and without the influence of the Divine, availeth nothing to Souls as to their spiritual or eternal good: Nor indeed, can the Humane Nature of Christ, without the Divine, give Grace, or any spiritual good thing. On the other hand, were we united to the Divine Nature alone, and not to the Humane, then our Union would be as ineffectual: for how full soever the Divine Nature is of Grace and Life in it self, yet nothing can thence be derived and communicated to us, but by and through the Humanity: And indeed, as the Humanity profiteth nothing without the Divinity; so I may say, the Divinity will profit us nothing without the Humanity. Hence it is, that Christ so often speaks of *eating his Flesh*, and *drinking his Blood*; and withal asserts the necessity thereof in order to life and happiness by him, *John* 6. 53, 54, 55. What doth *eating his Flesh and drinking his Blood* signifie, but an Union with his Humanity? And therefore in *vers.* 56. he addeth, *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him*; which is an

expression

expression of Union; and without this we have, we can have no Life, no Grace from him. In a word, as the humanity hath nothing to give or communicate to us, no Life, no Grace, no Spiritual Blessing without the Divinity; so the Divinity is incommunicable to us without the Humanity; and therefore were our Union with the one only without the other, it must needs be ineffectual. I will close this with the saying of an eminent Divine, *Although all Life, all Salvation floweth from the fulnesse of the Deity that is in Christ, yet notwithstanding it is not communicated to us but in the flesh, and by the flesh of Christ. For the Deity is as the Fountain whence all good things flow, Life and Salvation; but the flesh, or humanity, is as the Channel, by which all these good things, and all Gifts and Graces are derived unto us; therefore unless a man apprehendeth this Channel, and be united to it, he cannot possibly be made a partaker of these Waters which do flow from this Fountain.*

Etsi tota salus & vitæ a Deitate ejus plenitudine pendet quæ est in Christo, interim tamen nobis non communicatur nisi in carne & per carnem Christi: Deitas enim est ceu fons unde fluunt omnia bona, vita, & salus, sed caro atque humanitas est ceu canalis per quem ad nos derivantur omnia hæc bona omnesque gratiæ, nisi quis igitur canalem hunc apprehendat, eique uniatur, aquarum cursu quæ è fonte profluunt, particeps fieri non potest. Zanch. *in Thes. de connubio Spirituali.*

2. On the other hand, the whole Person of the Believer is united to Christ; not his Soul onely without his Body, nor yet his Body onely without his Soul, but his whole Person consisting of both Soul and Body in conjunction; As Christ is the Saviour, so he

he is the Head of the whole Person of every Believer, for he saves none but those whom he is a Head unto: And as Christ is the Head of, so he must have union with the whole Person of every Believer; for his being an Head implies union, and that union must extend as far as his Headship doth, even to the whole Person: In short, the Believers Soul is united to Christ, therefore saith the *Apostle*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit*; and the Believers Body is united to Christ, and therefore the Bodies of Believers are said to be *Members of Christ*, 1 Cor. 6. 15. thus this union is a full union: And as it is a full, so it is a very near union. Next to those two great Unions, the essential Union, the Union of the three Persons in One, and the same Divine Essence, and the Personal Union, the Union of the two Natures, Divine and Humane, in the Person of Christ; this is the nearest Union. Hence it is expressed, sometimes by their *being in each other*, John 14. 20. *Ye shall know, that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you*: sometimes by their *dwelling in each other*; John 6. 56. *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* And what can be nearer, than to be and dwell in each other? It is a nearer Union than that between the Husband and the Wife; for that Union may be broken, and is at last, but this never is, never can be broken, (as in its place will be shewn).

III. This

III. This Eſpouſal, or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers, carries in it full and laſting communion: In Marriage-relations there is a full and free communion between the Parties, both in what they are, and what they have: The Husband admits the Wife into a participation in all he is and hath; on the other hand, he communicates with her in all ſhe is and hath; and indeed union is in order to communion: So here, in the Eſpouſal or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers, there is a full and free communion between them in all they are and have. On the one hand, Chriſt communicates himſelf unto the Believer, he admits him into a fellowſhip and participation with him in all his riches and fulneſs; hence is, that *John* 1. 16. *of his fulneſs have all we received, and that Grace for Grace:* verſ. 14. He is ſaid to be *full of Grace:* And what Grace is that? Why all Grace, Perſonal Grace, Purchaſed Grace, Grace of Priviledge, and Grace of Influence: And here it is ſaid, that *of his fulneſs have all we received*; not *ſome* onely, but *all*, great and ſmall *have received*, and that not in a low, poor, ſcanty meaſure onely, but in great abundances therefore it's added, *and Grace for Grace*; or Grace upon Grace, heaps of Grace, Grace in a plentiful manner, all Grace needful for the Soul, Righteouſneſs, Remiſſion of Sins,

Gratiam ſuper gratiam h. e. *accumulatiſſimam & copioſiſſimam, omnem gratiam, nempe juſtitiam, remiſſionem peccatorum, ſanctitatem, renovationem ſpiritus,* &c. Glaſ. Gram. Sacr.

Sanctifi-

Sanctification, Renovation of the Spirit, and the like. Look what-ever Christ is, or hath, which Believers are capable of, it is all theirs, and they all hold communion with him therein: His beauty is theirs; and how black and deformed soever they are in themselves, yet they are fair and comely in him: Hence faith the Spouse, *I am black, but comely*, Cant. 1. 5. that is, black in my self, but comely in Christ; black by Nature, but comely by the Redeemers Grace; *comely through the comeliness which he puts upon me*, Ezek. 16. 14. His Righteousness is theirs; and how guilty and unrighteous soever they are in themselves, yet in him they are Righteous, and do stand perfectly righteous in the sight of God: Hence his Name is said to be, *The Lord our Righteousness*, Jer. 23. 6. and they are said to be made *the Righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. His Priviledges and Dignities are theirs; and how vile and base soever they are in themselves; yet in him they are highly dignified and advanced. Is he a Son? so are they through him: *To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, to as many as believed in his Name*, John 1. 12. Is he an Heir, an Heir of God? so are they, they are Heirs, yea *coheirs with him of God*, Rom. 8. 17. Is he beloved by the Father, and that with a choice and singular love? so are they, they are beloved in him, Ephes. 1. 6. yea, they are beloved with the same love, wherewith he is beloved by the Father, John 17. 23. Is he

Nigra per naturam, formosa per gratiam. Aug.

he a King? so are they, he hath made them, and doth make them all Kings, and they do, and shall reign with him for ever, *Rev.* 1. 6. Is he in Heaven, in possession of happiness and glory? so are they: Hence they are said *to sit together with him in heavenly places*, Ephes. 2. 6. What shall I say? his glory is theirs: *The glory which thou gavest me* (saith he to his Father) *I have given them*, John 17. 22. Yea all his divine fulness is theirs; and how empty and imperfect soever they are in themselves, yet they are perfect and *compleat in him*, and in his fulness, *Col.* 2. 9, 10. *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily*; bodily, that is, truly, perfectly, unchangeably, and not typically only, as in the Temple of old. All the fulness and perfection of the God-head dwelleth truly and perfectly in him: And what then? why it follows, *and ye are compleat in him*, q.d. You are poor and empty things in your selves, but your Head and Husband hath all the fulness of the God-head in him, and it is alwayes in him; for it dwelleth in him; and it is all yours, and you do communicate with him in all, so far as you are capable of it, to compleat you both in Grace and Glory. Thus Christ communicates himself unto the Believer, and admits him into a participation

In Christo beatam immortalitatem & gloriam possidemus. Calv. in loc.

Σωματικῶς h. e. *Verè, perfectissimè, & immutabiliter, & non typicè tantum, ut in Templo Hierosolymitano.* Glas. Rh. Sac.

Ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστε ἐν ipso compleri, q. d. *quod totus Deus in Christo resident, ideo ut ipsum adepti, solidam in ipso perfectionem possideamus.* Calv. in Col. 2. 10.

pation with him in all he is and hath.

On the other hand, Christ partakes and holds communion with Believers in all they are and have: And what is their All? truly a poor All; in and of themselves, they have nothing but sins and sorrows, guilt and afflictions. Indeed in marrying of them, he gives them Gifts, Graces, Comforts, and the like: and having given them these, he holds communion with them in all: their Gifts and Graces, their Joys and Comforts are his: but, I say, in and of themselves they have nothing but sorrows and sins, and he in a sort holdeth communion with them in both: he holds communion with them in their sorrows; hence it is said, that *in all their afflictions he is afflicted*, Isa. 63. 9. He looks upon their sorrows as his, and their sufferings as his. *I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, naked, imprisoned*, &c. *Mat.* 25. 35, 36. And often (you know) in Scripture, their Sufferings and Afflictions, are called the Sufferings and Afflictions of Christ: And why the Sufferings and Afflictions of Christ? not onely because for the most part they suffer for his sake; but also because he suffereth and is afflicted in them, and with them: He communicates with them in their afflictions: And, as in their sorrows, so also in some sort in their sins too: Hence he calls their sins, as well as their afflictions, his.

* *Christum nominat suas iniquitates, quia sensit in se translata esse peccata omnium nostrum, seque propter hac plecti, non aliter ac si ipse sc meis, tuis, & omnium hominum scelcribus polluisset.* Mol.

Mine

Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, Psal. 40. 12. Which *Luther*, and others, understand of Christ speaking of our sins, and calling them his: Not, my Beloved, that he doth admit of any the least stain or tincture of sinful defilement upon himself; but he so looks upon our sins as his, as to take them off from us, and looks upon himself responsible to the Fathers justice for them: so he was said to be *made sin for us*, *2 Cor. 5. 21. O what Grace is here! I close this head with a great and sweet saying, which I have read in one of the Ancients, suitable to this purpose. †*The like sweet Names are not to be found, by which the sweet Affections of Christ and the Soul are expressed each to other, as those of the Bridegroom and the Bride, for why, all things are common with them, nothing proper, having nothing separate and apart each from other; they have both one Inheritance, one House, one Table, one Marriage-bed, also one flesh:* The sum is, they communicate with each other in all they are and have.

* *Ipse peccatum, non suum sed nostrum, nec in se, sed in nobis factus est.* Aug.

† *Non sunt inventa aque dulcia nomina, quibus Verbi animaque dulces advicem exprimerentur affectus, quemadmodum sponsus & sponsa, quippe quibus omnia communia sunt, nil proprium, nil a se divisum habentibus, una utrinsque hareditas, una domus, una mensa, unus thorus, una etiam caro.* Bern. Serm. 7. in Cant.

IV. This Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, carries in it strong and ardent Affection. In a Marriage-relation, there is the deerest, strongest,

and most intimate Affection that is to be found among the Children of Men: 'Tis a Relation made up of love: Love is not only a concomitant of Marriage, but it is even a part of it, and is essential to it: In Matriages, Hearts must be joyned as well as Hands, or they are not right: So here in this Spiritual-espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, there is a very dear and intimate Affection each to other; their hearts are indeed knit, and do intimately cleave to one another: *The Saints* (sayes one) *are called the Spouse of Christ, Propter amoris magnitudinem*; because of that great and unparallel'd love that is between them. And it is a sweet saying, which I have read in one of the Antients to this purpose, *Christ* (sayes he) *calls himself our Bridegroom, that he might insinuate the greatness of his love to us, which decayes not with time; and he calls us his Spouse, not his Wife, noting that our love to him should be alwayes new, alwayes lively and vigorous.* The truth is, no love like that between Christ and his Spouse; Christ loves and espouses, and the Soul loves and is espoused; and both being espoused, do love for ever; and so this relation is both founded in love, and perfected in love; 'tis both made up and managed with love on all hands; Christ sets his love upon the Soul, and in that love espouses him to himself; and having

Christus se sponsum nostrum appellat, ut magnitudinem insinuet sui amoris, qui tempore non decrescit amicam suam sponsam non uxorem, to quod illius amor, semper novus sit. Bern. de pass. Dom.

having in this love of his espoused him to himself, then he loves him as his Spouse: often in the Book of *Canticles* his Spouse is called his Love; as also he on the other hand is called her Beloved: and what doth this note, but that the whole relation consists mainly in love, and that they are most dearly and intimately beloved by each other? Christ having espoused the Soul to himself, now his love runs out in full streams towards him; he loves him above all the rest of the Creatures, in some respects above the Angels themselves, as standing in a nearer relation to him than they do. On the other hand, the Souls love is drawn out to Christ, and loving him, he is espoused to him, and being espoused to him, he loves him yet more; now *Christ is laid between his breasts*, in his most intimate Affections, he has the Throne in his heart, *Cant.* 1. 13. yea the Soul by degrees comes to be *sick of love* to him, (as you have it) *Cant.* 2. 5. *Stay me with Flagons*, (sayes she) *comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of love*; to whom? to Christ: And truly this (as one of the Antients hath observed) *is a sweet sickness, a blessed Languor, a pleasant love*: And this love between Christ and his Spouse, is a chaste love, a Virgin love, a love that is pitched upon the person of each other; Christ loves the person of the Believer, and the Believer loves the Person of Christ. (Of which more in its place.)

Hic amor dulcis, hic languor suavis, hæc infirmitas sanctas. Bern.

V. This Espousal, or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, carries in it a mutual rest and complacency for ever. In a Marriage-relation, there is great delight and complacency the Parties have, or should have each in other, especially in the day of Espousals. You know how *Solomon* speaks, *Rejoyce with the Wife of thy Youth: let her be as the loving Hind and pleasant Roe: let her Breasts satisfie thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love*, Prov. 5. 18, 19. All noting that joy, rest, and complacency, that that relation carries in it, and the Parties have in each other; and we read (you know) of the joy of the Bridegroom, as the highest and purest that is found among the Sons of men. So in this spiritual Espousals between Christ and Believers, there is a mutual rest and complacency which they have in each other: They are, as it were, the rest, the joy, the satisfaction of each other; the solace of each others Soul. On the one hand, Christ rests and rejoyces in the Believer, as one would do in the Wife of his Youth: This his Spouse is to him, *as a loving Hind, and pleasant Roe*, and he lives joyfully with her: hence she is called his delight, and that as being married to him: *Thou shalt be called* Hephzibah, (saies he to her) *for the Lord delighteth in thee*, thou shalt be the joy and delight of my

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my Soul, *Iſa.* 62. 4. And again, *As a young man marryeth a Virgin, ſo ſhall thy Sons marry thee; and as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, ſo ſhall thy God rejoyce over thee*, verſ. 5. The ſum of all which amounts to this, That Chriſt marrying his People to himſelf, delights in them, and rejoyces over them, and that with the higheſt and pureſt delight and complacency of all others, a delight and complacency ſutable to the relation: The truth is, he ſpeaks as if all his delight were in them, as if he had forgotten to delight in the Angels, or in any of the works of his hands, but in them alone. *My goodneſs* (ſayes he to the Father) *extendeth not to thee, but to the Saints, in whom is all my delight*, Pſalm 16. 2. Yea, he declares himſelf raviſhed with them, as his Spouſe; Cant. 4. 9. *Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my Sister my Spouſe, thou haſt raviſhed my heart*: And he ſpeaks as one raviſhed indeed, *Cant.* 7. 6. *How fair and pleaſant art thou, O Love, for delight!* and *Chap.* 6. *v.* 5. he acknowledges himſelf captivated by her, *Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me*: Yea, he has declared them to be his Reſt, Pſal. 132. 14. *This is my reſt for ever*, (ſayes he) *here will I dwell, for I have deſired it*: It's ſpoken of *Zion*, as a Type of the Church, and Spouſe of Chriſt, and his reſt in her; and indeed they are his Reſt, his Soul is at reſt in them, in them is his higheſt joy: Hence that ſweet word, *Zeph.* 3. 17. *The Lord thy God, in the midſt of thee is mighty*;

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CHAP.

CHAP. III.

In which the way and means of the accomplishment of this Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers is enquired into, and a general account thereof given.

HAving seen somewhat of the nature of the Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, the next thing to be enquired into is, How this Espousal or Relation is made up and accomplished: To be sure, naturally we are all strangers to it, and unacquainted with it, being (as the *Apostle* speaks) *without Christ*, that is, without union with him, or any spiritual Relation to him, *Ephes.* 2. 12. But how then, and in what way is it brought about? In general, it is from Divine Grace, the Grace of God in Jesus Christ acting and laying out it self for us and upon us; and it is from Divine Grace two wayes, or as that Grace carries a double opposition with it. *First*, As it stands in opposition to any thing of worth or deservings in us; and so it flows from the riches of Divine Grace, as its onely Spring and Fountain: And, *secondly*, as that Grace stands in opposition to any thing of power or ability in us; and so it is effected by the

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CHAP.

CHAP. III.

In which the way and means of the accompliſhment of this Eſpouſal or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers is enquired into, and a general account thereof given.

HAving ſeen ſomewhat of the nature of the Eſpouſal or Marriage-relation between Chriſt and Believers, the next thing to be enquired into is, How this Eſpouſal or Relation is made up and accompliſhed: To be ſure, naturally we are all ſtrangers to it, and unacquainted with it, being (as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks) *without Chriſt*, that is, without union with him, or any ſpiritual Relation to him, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. But how then, and in what way is it brought about? In general, it is from Divine Grace, the Grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt acting and laying out it ſelf for us and upon us; and it is from Divine Grace two wayes; or as that Grace carries a double oppoſition with it. *Firſt*, As it ſtands in oppoſition to any thing of worth or deſervings in us; and ſo it flows from the riches of Divine Grace, as its onely Spring and Fountain: And, *ſecondly*, as that Grace ſtands in oppoſition to any thing of power or ability in us; and ſo it is effected by the

Power of Divine Grace as its Principle and Efficient: Accordingly take this General in these two Propositions.

I. This Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, flows from the Riches of Divine Grace, as its onely Spring and Fountain: that any of the Sons of Men are Married or Espoused to Christ, is not from any thing of worth or deservings in them, but purely and entirely from free Grace and Love dwelling and working in the heart of God and Christ towards them; and this account the Scripture gives us of it, Jer. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee*: as if he should say, I have drawn thee out of thy sins, out of thy unbelief, out of all thy carnal rests and refuges, and I have drawn thee to my self, into union and communion with my self, into a Marriage-covenant and Relation with my self; and all this from mine own free love, that love, that kindness, that has been in my heart towards thee from everlasting: So again, Hos. 2. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies*. Mark, It is mercy and loving kindness, which espouses Souls to Christ. *God saves one upon this place) espouses us to Christ, indeed thereunto by no merits of ours, but

*Despensat nos Deus Christo nullis nostris meritis adductus, sed ex sua tantum benignitate & misericordia. Zanch.

but by his own goodness and mercy. And indeed, my Beloved, what have we, or what have any of the sons of men, that should speak the one or the other worthy of a conjugal-relation to Christ, or that should invite and induce him to take us into such a relation to himself? Have we Birth or Parentage to induce him? No, alas! as to our state, we are all of the brood of Hell, and thence, as sinners, we all have our descent and original, *John* 8. 44. Have we beauty and amiableness? No, for we are all black and deformed in our selves, we have the spirit of the Devil in us, and the image of the Devil upon us; we are blind, and deaf, and dumb, and lame, and crooked: so the Scripture speaks of us in our natural state, we are all *in our blood* and gore, *cast out into the open field to the loathing of our persons*, Ezek. 16. 5, 6. And as their case is represented, *Isa.* 1. 6. such is ours spiritually, *Even from the sole of the foot, to the crown of the head, there is no soundness in us, nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores:* In a word, we are all sin, and have nothing but sin. *Know, O Spouse of Christ,* (saies one of the Ancients) *that thou hast nothing of thy self but sins; as for all thy good things, they are the Grace of thy Bridegroom to thee, to whom therefore give the glory of it:* I say, we have nothing but sins, and is there any beauty, any comeliness in that to attract an

Scito, ô sponsa Christi, te à teipsa nihil habere nisi peccata. Bona, verò omnia gratia sponsi tui sunt, gratulare ergo, i. e. gratias age ei, Bern. de pass. Dom.

Holy

Holy Jesus? Surely no. Have we Riches and Treasures? No; for indeed we are *poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked*, Rev. 3. 17. Treasures, it is true, we have, but they are black ones; treasures of sin and wickedness, treasures of guilt and wrath, which surely cannot render us worthy, but most unworthy of such a Relation. Have we wisdom and parts to invite him? No; we are *altogether brutish and foolish*, Jer. 10. 8. *Wise we are, but it is to do evil; to do good we have no knowledge:* Jer. 4. 22. Have we love and kindness in us towards him, good-nature? No; for naturally we love him not; yea, we *hate him*, and are enemies to him, Luk. 19. 14. We hate both him and the Father, as he charged the Jews of old: Yea, we are enmity it self to him, Rom. 8. 7. We are enemies to his Person, to his Kingdom, to his Grace, to his Righteousness, to his Wayes, and to all acquaintance and communion with him: Thus we have nothing to induce him to take us into such a Relation: at the best, we are but poor *worms, whose Foundation is in the dust*: And what can it be, but free and rich Grace in Christ to marry and espouse such unto himself?

II. This Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and Believers, is wrought and effected by the Power of Divine Grace, as its principle and efficient: When Souls are married and espoused to Christ, 'tis not done by any power or ability of their own, nor yet

yet by the power and efficacy of means and inſtruments, but 'tis purely from the power and efficacy of Divine Grace: Indeed, God makes uſe of Means and Inſtruments; he makes uſe of the Goſpel and Goſpel-Miniſters for the eſpouſing of ſinners to his Son, and theſe are the onely ordinary way and means whereby he doth it; therefore ſayes the *Apoſtle* in my Text, [*I*] *have eſpouſed you to one Husband*; that is, I by my Miniſtry, I by preaching the everlaſting Goſpel, have been an Inſtrument in God's hand for your eſpouſing to Chriſt: but though God thus makes uſe of means and inſtruments in this Work, yet ſtill the Work it ſelf is from pure Grace, and to Grace doth Chriſt attribute it, excluding all other power but this as ſufficient hereunto, *John* 6. 44. *No man can come to me*, or believe on me, cloſe with me in a Marriage-Covenant, *except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him*: that is, except the power of Divine Grace be put forth upon him in order hereunto: the drawing here Chriſt ſpeaks of, is comprehenſive of the whole buſineſs; it's the enabling of us to come to Chriſt, to believe on him, and cloſe with him as our Head and Husband. It notes (as one obſerves) not any violent coaction or conſtraint, but a ſweet bowing of the Will, which in it ſelf was averſe from, and oppoſite to God and Chriſt; and withal, a carrying of the Soul to Chriſt, and an

Non violenta coactio ſed voluntatis a Deo averſa benevola flexio, tractione ea innuitur. Glaſ. Rhet. Sac.

an enabling of him to close with him in this Relation: and this Christ ascribes wholly to the power of Divine Grace: the truth is, in and of our selves we have no power or ability for such a work; we are *without strength*, Rom. 6. 5. Yea, when we are brought into Christ by the power of Divine Grace; yet then, in and of our selves, *we can do nothing*; So Christ tells us, *Joh.* 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* Yea, when we are brought into Christ, and have had some communion with him; yet we can't follow after him, nor draw one tittle nearer to him, unless a fresh influence of Divine Grace be put forth upon us, enabling us thereunto: so much the Spouse was sensible of, and therefore prayes thus, *Draw me, and we will run after thee*, Cant. 1. 4. As if she should say, Lord in my self I can't stir one foot towards thee; but do thou put forth thy Power in drawing of me, and then, and not till then, shall I come nearer to thee. Yea, my Beloved, the espousing of Souls to Christ, is not only the Act or Work of Divine Grace, and the power of it; But 'tis the Act and Work of the mighty Power of that Grace; 'tis not an ordinary power that is and must be put forth therein, but even the greatness of the power of that Grace, a power no less than that which was put forth *in raising Christ from the dead*: So the Apostle tells us, *Ephes.* 1. 18, 19, 20. *That we may know* (saves he) *what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe,*

according

according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead. So then here is power, mighty power, the mighty power of God, the greatneſs of the mighty power of God, the exceeding greatneſs of the mighty power of God, the ſame exceeding greatneſs of the mighty power of God which raiſed Chriſt from the dead; and all put forth to enable us to believe, and ſo to cloſe with Chriſt in a Marriage-Covenant. Thus this Work is every way from Divine Grace. But here more particularly, the enquiry will be, What thoſe Acts or Works of Divine Grace are, by which poor ſinners come to be eſpouſed to Chriſt? I ſhall reduce them all to two Heads; they are either, (firſt) more remote, being Acts of Divine Grace put forth for us and towards us; or (ſecondly) more near, being Acts of Divine Grace put forth in us and upon us: In the firſt, the Father and Jeſus Chriſt work more immediately by and from themſelves: In the ſecond, they work by the influence and miniſtry of the Bleſſed Spirit: I'le ſpeak a little of each.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein are contained the more remote Acts of Divine Grace, put forth more immediately by the Father and Jesus Christ, for us and towards us, in order to the accomplishment of the Espousal between Christ and us.

THere are some more remote Acts of Grace, Acts of Grace put forth more immediately by the Father and Jesus Christ, for us, and towards us, in order to the making up of this Espousal or Marriage-relation between Christ and us; and of these I shall mention five, all which do necessarily concur, and have their influence into this business, and indeed there is much of the Mystery of God in them; They are these.

I. God the Father marries and espouses our Nature to the Person of his Son, and thereby fits and prepares him to be an Husband for us; this God has done once for all, and the influence thereof concurs unto the accomplishment of the Espousal between Christ and every Believer. I shall illustrate this unto you, from that Parable *Matth.* 22. *beg.* where we read of *a King who made a marriage*

marriage for his Son; by which King we are to understand God the Father; and by his Son, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of that Eternal Father, He, who proceeded from him by eternal generation: God the Father then is here said to make a marriage for his Son: But, pray, who is the Spouse? 'tis observed by Divines, that the Spouse is not here mentioned: Who or what then is she? 'tis answered, Christ has a two-fold Spouse; our Nature, and the persons of Believers: Both which may be intended here, though the first chiefly and principally; and so by the Marriage here we are to understand the Personal Marriage, the Marriage between the Person of the Son of God and our Nature: and so *Calvin* and others expound it: This primarily, but secondarily, &c by consequence, the Spiritual Marriage, the Marriage between Christ and Believers; and we are to look on the one as laying a foundation and making way for the other: So that the whole resolves into this, that God the Father hath married and espoused our Nature to the Person of his Son in the hypostatical union, and thereby has fitted and prepared him to be an Husband for us, and made way for the marriage of our persons to his Person in the Spiritual Union: And indeed, unless our Nature had been first married to him in the one, our persons could never possibly have been married to him in the other; for pray observe, the glory of Christ considered as the Eternal Son, and so as God, is too bright, and

Per nuptias intelligitur verbum in carnatum. Calvin.

and the distance between him and us too great for us to come to him, and he made one with him in a Marriage-relation: Christ considered in his own naked glory, as God, is too bright an Object for us to look upon, much more to have so near an union to, and communion with; one sight of him thus considered, is enough to swallow us up, and even to overwhelm our Spirits: We cannot thus see him and live: But now our Nature being married and espoused to his Divine Person; that is to say, he having assumed our Nature into union with himself, as the eternal Son, which the *Evangelist* calls his being *made flesh*, John 1. 14. And the Apostle, *his partaking of flesh and blood*, Heb. 2. 14. Hereby the overwhelming brightness of his Glory is vailed, and the dreadful terror of his greatness, together with the affrighting distance between him and us is taken away: Yea, hereby his glory is brought down (as one hath it) to our eye, to our beholding: Hereby he has marvellously sweetned and endeared himself to us, and made way for us for a free access to him, and the nearest union and communion with him: Hence Divines give this as one reason of Christs incarnation, that he might thereby become a fit Husband for his People, and they might be capable of union and communion with him: * *Therefore* (as a Learned Man has observed) *was the Son of God made Man, that he might be*

**Hac de causâ Filius Dei factus est homo ut posset verus esse sponsus Ecclesiæ.*

he a true, a fit Bridegroom for the Church; and 'tis rightly observed by Divines, that in strict propriety of speech, neither the Father, nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son, the second Person in Trinity, is the Churches Bridegroom; and they give this reason for it, because he only was made Man, he only was incarnate. O, had not the Son of God been incarnate, had he not (as *Austin*'s expression is) *married our Nature to himself in the Womb of the Virgin*, none of us had ever been capable of such a priviledge, such an happiness, as a conjugal-union and communion with him. That therefore is the first Act of Grace in this business.

II. God the Father gives Christ unto the Soul, and the Soul to Christ; he gives Christ for an Head and Husband to the Soul, and he gives the Soul for a Bride or Spouse to Christ. (First) He gives Christ for an Head and Husband to the Soul, in *John* 4. 10. Christ is called *the Gift of God*: And how the Gift of God? two wayes, (1st) in that he gave him for us; he gave him to be incarnate, to suffer, to bleed, to dye, to be made sin and a curse for us; he gave him as an Offering and a Sacrifice for us; and (secondly) in that he gives him also to us, he gives him to be an Head and Husband to us: Hence 'tis said, That *he gave him to be Head to the Church*, and such an Head as has the command and dispose of all things; *He gave him to be Head over all things to the Church*,

Ephes. 1. 22. born in the Counsel of his Will from Eternity, and also in the Act of Work of his Grace here in Time, he thus gives Christ to us: And O how richly and gloriously doth his Grace shine forth herein! In giving Christ to us, he gives his best and his dearest; for he has nothing better, nothing dearer to him than his Christ, (as afterwards may be shewn). (Secondly) He gives the Soul for a Bride or Spouse to Christ: Believers (you know) are often said to be given by the Father to Jesus Christ; *My Father which gave them me* (says Christ concerning Believers) *is greater than all*, Joh. 10. 29. And *thine they were, and thou gavest them me*, Joh. 17. 6. with many other places which might be mentioned. God gives all the Elect to Christ to be his Spouse; he gives them to him (first) in the eternal purpose and counsel of his Grace; in the day of everlasting love, when God first set his heart upon his chosen ones, then gave he them to his Son, and willed their union to him in a Marriage-Covenant; and he gives them to him also (secondly) in the work of Vocation, which makes way for the working of Faith in Christ in the Soul. *The Father* (says one) *hath given this Spouse to his Son*, (speaking of his Church) *and joyns her to him by his Spirit.* And, my Beloved, without this Act of Grace put forth by God towards us, the Match would never be made between Christ and any poor Soul; for this indeed is that which brings the Soul to Christ. So much

Pater hanc sponsam dedit Filio & per suum spiritum eis copulavit.

Christ

Christ himself tells us, John 6. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.* Mark, 'tis the Fathers giving us to Christ, that brings us to him; and were we not by the Father given to him, we should never come to him by believing; and if we never came to him by believing, there could never be a Marriage-union and relation between him and us.

III. Christ readily approves and accepts of the Fathers Gift, being willing, yea longingly desirous to espouse them unto himself, whom his Father gives him in order thereunto. In the making up of a Marriage, 'tis not enough that the Father gives such or such an one to his Son, and his Son to her; but there must also be the consent of the Son; he must approve and accept of the Fathers Gift; and so does Christ here, he approves and accepts of the Fathers Gift: the Father wills his taking such and such poor sinners to Wife, and accordingly gives him to them, and them to him, and the Will of Christ falls in with, and is conformed to the Will of the Father herein, and so the Match goes on: this you have clearly held forth, John 6. 37. *All that the Father hath given me, cometh unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* Mark, Here are among others, two things. 1. Here is the Fathers giving of poor sinners to Christ, and therein his will and consent that they should be espoused to him; that in these

words, *All that the Father hath given me.* 2. Here is Christs approbation and acceptation of this Gift of the Father, with his will and consent to espouse them to himself; that in these words, *And him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out:* that is, I will assuredly receive him, and accept of him; I will take him into a conjugal union and relation to my self. Christ here plainly declares his acceptance of the Father's Gift, giving poor sinners to him to be his Spouses. 'Tis a great Saying, and suitable to this I am speaking, which I have read in a great Divine, *The eternal will and good pleasure of God precedes* (sayes he) *but Christ the Bridegroom cannot but will the same thing which the Father wills; his Will is conformed to the Fathers, and therefore does he accept us as his Spouse.* In a word, in this Act of Grace, Christ's Language is such as this; Father, dost thou give such and such poor sinners to me? and is it thy Will, that they should be espoused to me? Content; I do freely accept of them, and am willing to espouse them to my self for ever: 'tis true, they are poor worthless Creatures, altogether unsuitable to my dignity and greatness; but Father they are thy Gift, and I accept of them as such: true, there is no beauty in them, that I should desire them, but they are thy Gift, and I will adorn them and make them beautiful: and Oh what Grace is this!

Præcedit æterna Dei voluntas, Christus vero sponsus non potest non velle, quod vult Pater: ideo not accipit, ut sponsam suam.

IV. The Lord Jesus Christ not only approves and accepts of the Fathers Gift, but moreover he redeems them thus given to him with the price of his own Blood; he ransoms them from Sin, and Death, and Hell, whereunto in themselves they were all in bondage, which also necessarily concurs to the accomplishment of the espousal between him and them. 'Tis observed by some, that in the Eastern Countries, it was the manner for men to buy their Wives; and indeed so much seems to be intimated in that Message of *Saul* to *David*, 1 Sam. 18. 25. where when he would perswade *David* to marry his Daughter, in pretence at least, he sends him word, that he desired not any Dowry, but so and so: It seems then, that it was usual to expect a Dowry. The same also appears by the practice of *Shechem*, Gen. 34. 11, 12. where being in love with *Dinah*, *Jacobs* Daughter, he profered to give a Dowry for her; *Give me* (sayes he), *but thy Damsel to Wife, and ask me never so much Dowry and Gifts, and I will give it thee.* To be sure so 'tis here, Christ buyes all his Spouses, and gives a vast Gift for them; Christ indeed is in love with poor sinners, given him by the Father, and desires to marry them to himself; but he must buy them if he means to have them, and buy them he does, and at a dear rate; he gives a great Dowry for them, even his Life, his Blood, his Glory, and all for a time: Hence he is said *to give himself for us*, Ephes. 5. 25. and to *purchase*

by his Blood, Acts 20. 28. Hence we are said to be *bought by him with a price*, with a great price, a price of inestimable value, even *his own most precious Blood*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. The case lies thus, the Elect, as well as others, were all gone into captivity, sold under Sin and Satan, in bondage to Death, and Hell, and Wrath, which is the condition of all by Nature; and if Christ will have them as his Spouse, he must ransom and redeem them from all; which accordingly he does: he bleeds, he dies, *he gives himself a ransom* for them, in order to the marrying of them to himself: He had indeed a mind to a Spouse among the Children of Men, and was in love with them from all eternity, as he himself tells us, Prov. 8. 31. and so in love with them, as that he does in effect say unto the Father, as *Sichem* did to *Jacob*, *Ask me never so much Dowry, and I will give it*. Why, my Son, sayes the Father, if thou will have them, and marry them to thy self, thou must give thy Blood, thy Life for them, thou must redeem them from Sin, and Death, and Hell, whereunto they are in bondage; which can't be done by less than thy giving thy self a ransom for them: all which Christ assents unto, and complies with, and that with delight, freely giving himself for them. And oh what Grace is this! Oh to give such a price for such a Spouse! a price so great, for a Spouse so black and unworthy: this is glorious Grace indeed!

V. Christ

2. Christ makes love to them, renders himself unto their embraces, and wishes wooeth them for their acceptance of him, and that with the greatest and most affectionate importunity. How much soever it has cost Christ to redeem poor sinners, and how great a Dowry soever he has given for them, yet they are unwilling to close with him, they have no mind, no heart Christward, and so the Match is not like to be made up unless something further be done; therefore after all, Christ (as one phrases it) comes a wooing to them, he makes love, offering himself to them, and earnestly sollicites them for their love and acceptance: he importunes them, and that in such a way, as if he were resolved to take no denyal; in *Ezek.* 16. 8. we read of a *time of love*, a time (that is) of Christ's making love to sinners lying in their blood and gore. And indeed, Christ has his times of love, times when he makes love, and offers himself with all his Riches and Treasures to poor sinners: when his language to them is, *Behold me, behold me*, Isa. 65. 1. and *look unto me, and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth*, Isa. 45. 22. Now he comes, and tells over the stories of his love to them, how much he has done and suffered for them, how much his desire is towards them, what great things he will bestow upon them, and initiate them into, and all to win and allure them to himself, to gain their love and consent to accept of him, and to be his in a Marriage-Covenant. Time

was when Christ came and did this himself in person; when he *stood, and cryed, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink,* John 7. 37. Time was, when in his own Person he importuned poor sinners from day to day, he made love to them time after time, as he did (you know) to *Jerusalem*, Matth. 23. 37. for some years together he wooed them, and offered himself and his grace to them in his own person; and though he does not now come in person, yet as *David* sent his Servants to *Abigail, to commune with her*, and to acquaint her with his purpose and desire to *take her to Wife*, 1 Sam. 25. 39. so Christ sends us his Servants, his Ministers to poor sinners to commune with them, and to declare the love and purposes of his heart towards them, and to woo them for him; yea, and as *Ambassadors for Christ*, we do woo poor Souls; and *as in Christ's stead, beseech them to be reconciled to God*, to give up their Names and Souls to Christ in a Marriage-Covenant, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. And because we can prevail nothing by and of our selves upon the spirits of men in this great Matter, Christ over and above, sends his own blessed Spirit to woo them, and gain upon them, making them *willing in the day of his power*, Psal. 110. 3. And this leads me to the consideration of those other Acts of Grace in this business, wherein the Father and Jesus Christ work by the Spirit in us and upon us, for the making up of the Match between Christ and us; Only, by the way,

way, let us still see and admire the Grace of Jesus Christ to poor sinners. O that he should woo such poor vile Creatures as we are, and make love to us! Should you see a King, a great King, wooing a Begger, coming now himself in person, and then sending his Servants to her to sollicite and importune her love; you would look on this to be great Grace: but oh this is nothing to the Grace of Christ, in condescending to woo such as we are, sinners lying in our Blood.

CHAP. V.

Which gives an account of those (which I call) more near Acts of Grace, which the Father and Jesus Christ by the Spirit do put forth in us and upon us for the effecting of the Espousals between Christ and us.

DIvine Grace has not yet done its work; no, there are other Acts which it does, and must put forth, if ever the Marriage be made up between Christ and us; and these I call more near, because they are wrought in us and upon us, and do more immediately conduce to the tying of the Marriage-Knot between Christ and the Soul: And as in the former,

former, the Father and Jesus Christ wrought more immediately of and by themselves: so in these the blessed Spirits influence comes in, and his Grace shews it self, they in these acting by him; and the truth is, the Match is all this while but half made: but now God comes, and by his Spirit working in and upon the Soul, carries on and compleats it; which he does by these five Acts of Grace.

I. The Soul is, by the Spirit of God, divorced from its old Husband, the Law, and thereby is fitted and prepared for an espousal to Christ: Naturally we are all married to another Husband, even to the Law, and we must be divorced from that, or we can never be married and espoused to Christ: So much the *Apostle* clearly holds forth, *Rom.* 7. 4. *Wherefore, my Brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the Body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* Paul mark, *married to another*; the Law then was their Husband, to which they were married, and that they must be dead to, and divorced from, if ever they would be married to Jesus Christ: Look, Brethren, (for 'tis his own Argument and Allusion in *vers.* 2 and 3) as a Woman can't be the Wife of two Husbands at once, but her present Husband must be dead before she can be married to another: so neither can a Soul be espoused to these two Husbands at once

once, the Law and Christ, but he must be dead to, or divorced from the one, e're he can be married to the other: Observe, *ye are dead to the Law*: What is it to be dead to the Law, or divorced from the Law? To be dead to the Law, is to have no hope, no expectation of Life and Righteousness by the Law: 'tis to be sensible, that the Law cannot save us; yea, there is more in it than so. To be dead to the Law, is to see our selves dead by the Law; 'tis to see our selves lost and condemned by the Law, for sin, as the transgression thereof; and thus we must all be dead to the Law, or divorced from the Law, or we cannot be married to Christ. Now this the Spirit of God effects by a work of the Law upon the Conscience: He divorces the Soul from the Law by the Law, i.e. by bringing home the Law to the Conscience: This the Apostle felt in his own Soul, *I through the Law* (says he) *that is, the Spirit of God bringing home the Law to my Conscience, am dead to the Law*, Gal. 2. 19. So again, *Rom.* 7. 9. *I was alive without the Law once, but when the Commandment came, sin revived, and I dyed.* I was alive without the Law once, that is, I thought my self to be alive, I apprehended my state to be good and happy; but this was without the Law, i.e. before the Spirit of God, by the ministry of the Law, convinced me of my sin and misery; therefore it follows, when the Commandment came, sin revived, and I dyed; i.e. when the Law came in its convincing

vincing power through the Spirit upon my Soul, then I saw my sinful, dead, and miserable state: thus was he himself divorced from the Law, that he might be married to Christ: the sum is this, the Spirit of God comes and shews the Soul the strictness and holiness, the purity and spirituality of the Law, and makes him sensible how large the Duty is that it requires; how impossible it is for him to keep it, and how many wayes he has broken it; he withal lets him see the dreadfulness of that curse and condemnation it has justly laid him under for the breach thereof; and thus he is divorced from it: and this is all one with the Spirits convincing us of sin, and our lost and miserable condition by reason thereof; which is (you know) his first work in order to Faith, and so to our espousing to Christ, *John* 16. 8. Thus by the Spirit of God the Soul is divorced from the Law, he is taken off from all expectations of life and happiness by that, and is made to see his own sinfulness, and so his infinite need of Christ, whereby he is fitted for this other and better Husband.

II. The Soul being thus divorced from the Law, and so fitted and prepared for Christ, then the Spirit of God reveals and offers the Lord Jesus Christ in the promise of the Gospel, as a better Husband to him: Now the blessed Spirit comes, and does as *Abrahams* Servant did, who was sent to take a Wife for *Isaac*; he told *Rebecca* of his Masters

stern Greatness, of his Flocks, and his Herds, his Silver and his Gold, his men-servants and his maid-servants, and withal, *that he had given all to* Isaac, *Gen.* 24. 35, 36. So the Spirit of God now sets before the Soul the riches and the greatness, the beauty and the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ: he tells him, what a full, what a sweet, what a rich, what an amiable one he is, and withal, tenders him to his embraces: he reveals and offers him to him, as one full of Grace and Truth, as one that has all fulness dwelling in him, all fulness of Life and Peace, of Righteousness and Salvation: as one every way able to save him to the very utmost, which is that which Christ calls his *convincing the World of Righteousness*, John 16. 9. he reveals and offers him to him in the transcendent Beauty, Excellency, and Amiableness of his Person on the one hand; as also in the glorious fulness, largeness, & sufficiency of his Grace and Righteousness on the other hand: Thus (I say) he reveals and offers Christ unto the Soul, and withal, opens his Glory, and causes it to shine forth before him; so that now the Soul sees that in Christ, that fulness, that beauty, that love, that amiableness, that sweetness, which he never saw before; Christ is now another thing in the Souls eye than ever before he was: Now the Soul, as those *John* 1. 14. *Beholds his glory, as the glory of the onely begotten Son, full of grace and truth*: Yea, not only does he thus reveal Christ unto the Soul, but withal fixes

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the Souls eye upon him: He makes him to pore and gaze upon Christ, as the most excellent and amiable Object, and as one infinitely needful for him; and this is called *a seeing of the Son*, and that in order to believing; *whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting life*, Joh. 6. 40. The blessed Spirit deals by the Soul herein, as God by the Angels did with *Hagar*, Gen. 21. 19. where 'tis said, *He opened her eyes, and she saw a Well of Water for her relief*. She was in a very distressed condition, as you may see *vers.* 15, 16. full of bitterness, she and her Child both in a perishing condition, being in the Wilderness, and her Water in the Bottle being spent: Now God shews her a Well of Water, whence she fetches a full supply. So here, the poor Soul having been under the convincing power of the Law, sees himself in a woful, miserable, distressed condition; whereupon he is full of bitterness, crying out with *Hagar*, *How shall I see the Child die?* How can I bear it to perish eternally? But now the Spirit of God comes, and opens his eyes, and shews him Christ, and Christ as infinitely suitable to him: Look, saies the Spirit to the Soul, being now desolate and undone, look, here is a Saviour for thee, a Husband for thee, another and a better Husband than the Law could ever have been, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who is infinitely able to pay all thy Debts, to supply all thy Wants, to heal all thy Wounds, to relieve all thy Distresses, to

pardon

pardon all thy Sins, to satisfie all thy Desires, to answer all thy Love, and to give thee perfect happiness and satisfaction in and with himself for ever: Look, here he is, here he is in the Promise, here he is in the Covenant, here he is in the Tender & Invitation of the Gospel; here he is at the very door of thy heart, knocking and calling for admission thereunto, *Rev.* 3. 20. Here he is with his Arms wide open to receive and embrace thee; and that notwithstanding all thy vileness, sinfulness, and unworthiness: Look therefore to him and be saved.

III. With this Tender and Revelation of Christ unto the Soul, the Spirit of God comes and works a secret love and longing in the Soul after Christ; he does not make a naked tender and revelation of Christ onely to the Soul; for that were not enough, but he withal gives him a secret touch, whereby he is made to breath and long after Christ, to move a little Christward; *He drops a little Myrrhe upon the handle of the Lock*, as it were, whereby he is drawn out in holy Longings and Breathings after sweet Jesus; as you know the case sometimes was with the Spouse, *Cant.* 5. *beg.* and this the Scripture calls an hungring and thirsting after Christ, and has a blessedness annext to it, *Matt.* 5. 6. and frequently else-where. Yea, such is that secret touch, which in and with those tenders and revelations of Christ, the Spirit of God gives the Soul, as that (like

that

that of the Loadstone to the Needle) which sets it a trembling, and will not suffer it to rest, till it stands fully pointed Christward; yea, till it finds it self in the very bosom and imbraces of that Beloved; 'tis indeed such as by degrees makes the Soul *sick of love and longings after Christ*, Cant. 5. 8. and he cries out for Christ, as *Rachel* sometimes did for Children; *Give me Children* (said she) *or else I die*: So give me Christ, sayes the Soul, or else I die, I perish, and that for ever: In a word, nothing but Christ will satisfie him; send him to the Creatures, send him to his own duties and services, send him to his highest accomplishments and attainments, and without Christ they will not do; yea, all these he accounts *but as dung, as dogs-meat, that he may win Christ*, Phil. 3. 8. Indeed, Heaven and Earth, with all the fulness of both, are nothing to him without Christ, and an union with Christ: his language now is, O Christ, Christ above ten thousand Worlds! O that Christ were mine! O that I had union with him! Oh that I were in his imbraces! Oh how happy are they that are married to him! and how happy should I be could I call him mine! This I say is his language, and when once it comes to this, then things work well indeed, then the Match is in a good forwardness, there being but an hairs breadth, as it were, between Christ and the Soul. Therefore,

IV. The

IV. The Soul being thus inclined Christward, and drawn forth in holy Longings after Union and Communion with him; the Spirit of God comes and enables him to believe, he carries the Soul to Christ in a way of believing, whereby he actually closes with him, and is espoused unto him: For, my Beloved, 'tis Faith which ties the Marriage-Knot, and makes up the Marriage-Union between Christ and us: Hence Christ is said *to dwell in our hearts by Faith*, Ephes. 3. 17. Christ's dwelling in our hearts, notes the nearest Union and Communion between him and us: And how comes he thus to dwell in our hearts? why, by Faith, by our believing on him: Hence also Christ tells us, That *he that eateth his flesh, and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in him, and he in him*, Joh. 6. 56. By eating Christs Flesh, and drinking his Blood, is meant, our believing on him, and so he himself expounds it; for he makes eating and drinking of him, and believing on him, all one throughout that Chapter: Now (sayes he) *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him*; that is, he has the nearest Union and Communion with me: 'tis Faith then (you see) that unites, and so espouses us to Christ: Faith gives Christ an inlet into the Soul, and it gives the Soul an inlet into Christ, and so they are made one and married together: By believing, we consent to take Christ, and actually do take

Sicut Christus per Spiritum suæ communicationem sese nobis unit, sic nos per fidem illi adglutinamur, &c.

Edis Christum non dente sed fide. Aug.

him for our onely Head and Husband for ever; and so the Match is made up between him and us: *We by Faith* (says a learned Man) *wrought in us by the holy Spirit, do consent unto this marriage with Christ*; Christ, as you heard before, consents thereunto; as God he consented hereunto from all eternity, and as Man he consents hereunto in time. For, as Divines observe, Christ hath a double Will, his Divine and Humane; with the first, he consented to this Espousal from eternity, with the second, he consents hereunto in Time, and never changes therein. Now as Christ gives his consent, so we also must give ours; which we do by believing in him; by which therefore the Match is made up between him and us. Now there is a three-fold Act of Faith, which the Spirit of God works in the Soul, whereby he more especially closes with Christ, and is espoused unto him, made one with him in a Marriage-Covenant.

Nos per fidem, in nobis a Spiritu sancto excitatam, in hoc cum Christo conjugium consentimus. Zanch. *in Thes. de conjugio Spirituali.*

Filii voluntas duplex est, una divinæ, altera humanæ naturæ; utraque autem voluit & vult hoc conjugium cum electis, una voluit ab æterno, altera in tempore quæ nunquam mutatur. Id. Ib.

I. An Act of Choice or Election.
II. An Act of Trust or Dependance.
III. An Act of Resignation or Subjection.

I. An Act of Choice or Election: In the Act

Act or Work of Believing, the Soul is by the Spirit of God made solemnly and deliberately to chuse Christ as his only Head and Husband, his Lord and Saviour, being thus offered to him in the Gospel. Choice or Election, as the School-men tell us, is an Act of the Will, whereby it pitches upon some one thing, and prefers that before all others in order to such or such an end: Accordingly we may conceive of this Act of Faith we are speaking of: It lies thus, the Will is by the Spirit of God sweetly and powerfully determined upon Christ, preferring him for an Head and Husband, a Lord and Saviour before all others: It singles him out, as it were, from all others, whether persons or things, in Heaven and Earth, and imbraces him as the best Husband, the best Saviour, the best Lord: There are others which make love to him, and tender themselves to his embraces, as Sin, Self, the Law, the World with its Intercements; but he passes by all, yea, rejects all with loathing and indignation, and pitches upon Christ as infinitely best, saying to him, *I will have none in Heaven but thee; and there is none upon Earth that I desire in comparison of thee.* This the Scripture calls sometimes *a laying hold upon Christ*, Prov. 3. 18. Sometimes a *receiving* or imbracing *of Christ*, Joh. 1. 12. 'Tis true, in the Work of Faith, Christ is and must be received into the understanding; but he is most properly said to be received into our Will and Affections: Christ in the Gospel is revealed and offered

to the Soul with all his Riches, Fulnes, and Perfections; he is tendered to him, as a full, a mighty, and uttermost Saviour, as one who has not onely an infinite fulness and sufficiency in him to redeem and save, but also an infinite sutableness and amiableness in him to indear and delight the Soul; and accordingly the Soul accepts and imbraces him, he cleaves to him, and fastens upon him, resolving to have none but him alone: his language of him now is, There is none like Christ, no head like this Head, no husband like this Husband, no saviour like this Saviour for my Soul: This is the Head, the Husband, the Saviour that I need, and that indeed my Soul desires: No love like his Love, no beauty like his Beauty, no blood like his Blood, no righteousness like his Righteousness, no fulness like his Fulness; He therefore, and he alone shall be my Head, my Husband, my Saviour, and my All for ever. Sweet Jesus (sayes he) dost thou tender thy self for an Head and Husband to me, and art thou willing to be imbraced by me? Lo then I do with my whole Soul accept of thee, and that for all times and in all conditions, with all thine Holiness as well as thy Love, with all thine Inconveniences as well as thy Priviledges; to suffer for thee, as well as to reign with thee; and this the Soul does upon the deepest counsel, and most mature deliberation; and accordingly he abides by his choice for ever.

II. An Act of Trust or Dependance: As in the Work of Faith the Soul is, by the Spirit of God, made to chuse Christ; so also to trust and depend upon him for all Grace, Righteousness, and Salvation: Now it bottoms upon Christ, anchors upon Christ, rests and relies upon Christ for all Life and Peace, for all Grace on Earth, and Glory in Heaven: He layes the whole weight and stress of his Salvation upon him: He commits all to him, ventures all upon him, expects all from him: This the Scripture calls sometimes *a trusting in Christ*, Ephes. 1. 13. sometimes a *leaning upon Christ*, Cant. 8. 5. sometimes a *hoping in Christ*, 1 Cor. 15. 19. And in this respect Christ is called *our Hope*, 1 Tim. 1. 1. our Hope, that is, the Object of our Hope and Trust as to Life and Salvation. The Soul has no hope in himself, no hope in the Creature, no hope in the Law or first Covenant, no hope in any thing in Heaven or Earth on this side Christ: He looks here and there, to this and that, but he can find no solid ground of hope, no bottom to build or rest upon for Life and Salvation; but then he turns his eye upon Christ, and there he sees abundant ground of hope; he beholds him upon the Cross, and there's hope; he beholds him upon the Throne, and there's hope; he looks upon him dying, and there's hope; he looks upon him rising, ascending, sitting at the Father's right Hand, making intercession for us, and there's hope; He looks upon the infinite vertue of his

Blood, the infinite efficacy of his Spirit, the infinite fulneſs of his Grace, the infinite dimenſions of his Love, the infinite freeneſs and faithfulneſs of his Promiſe; and in theſe he ſees infinite ground of hope and truſt; and accordingly he rolls and ventures all upon him: Here I'le build, (ſayes he) here I'le bottom, here I'le reſt, here I'le hang and depend, here I'le live; yea, and if die I muſt, here I'le die. His language to Chriſt now is like that of the *Pſalmiſt* to God in another caſe, *Pſalm 39. 7. Now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* This is to *caſt anchor within the Vail*, Heb. 6. 6. And indeed, 'tis with poor Souls many times, as with perſons at Sea; the Storm ariſes, the Waves lift up themſelves, which beating upon them, they are ready to ſink every moment, and their very Soul is melted becauſe of heavineſs; but anon they ſound bottom, caſt anchor, and are at reſt: So poor Souls are under ſtorms of ſin, guilt, and wrath, periſhing in their own apprehenſion every moment; but anon they drop an anchor of hope upon Chriſt, and do reſt upon him: or 'tis with them in this caſe, as 'twas with the Dove when ſhe was firſt ſent out of the Ark, ſhe found no reſting place abroad for the ſole of her foot; but at length returned to the Ark, and there found reſt, *Gen. 8. 8, 9.* So the poor guilty Soul finds no reſt any where elſe but in Chriſt. His language in this Act of Faith is ſuch as this, I am a poor, loſt, ſinful, diſtreſſed Creature, and there is but

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one door I can expect relief from, and that is Christ, and at this door I'le lie and wait; I know he is able to help me, for he can save to the uttermost: and surely he hath bowels, great bowels towards poor sinners; he is a merciful High-Priest: He saves concerning him, as they sometimes did concerning the King of Israel; *Behold, we have heard, that the King of Israel is a merciful King, peradventure he will save us*: yea, he has bid me look to him and be saved; and he invites all that are weary and heavy-laden, to come to him, and promises them rest: Why then should I not rest and rely upon him? 'Tis true, I am a mighty sinner, but he is a more mighty Saviour: Have I sinned to the utmost? He has satisfied to the utmost: What shall I say? True, I am Death, but Christ is Life: I am Darkness, but Christ is Light; I am Sin, but Christ is Holiness; I am Guilt, but Christ is Righteousness; I am Emptiness and Nothingness, but Christ is Fulness and Sufficiency; I have broken the Law, but Christ has fulfilled the Law; and his Life is infinitely able to swallow up my Death; his Light, my Darkness; his Holiness, my Sin; his Righteousness, my Guilt; his Fulness, my Emptiness; on him therefore I'le lean, and live, and hope. 'Tis true, I am utterly unworthy of any Life, any Grace, any Favour; but Christ does all for sinners freely, he loves freely, he pardons freely, he saves freely; how vile therefore and unworthy soever I am, yet I will rest and depend upon

him: Who knows but he may cast an eye of love upon me? This is that Act of Faith which is held forth, *Isa.* 45.24. *Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* I have neither strength nor righteousness of my own, but I have all righteousness and strength in Christ; all righteousness for Pardon and Justification, and all strength for Holiness and Sanctification; this is that the Apostle calls a *rejoycing in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh,* Phil. 3.3.

To draw towards a conclusion of this Head: Which way soever the Soul looks on this side Christ, he meets with nothing but discouragement: If he looks to himself, there he sees nothing but sin and guilt, blackness and deformity; in his heart he sees a Fountain of sin, an Abysse of sin, a very Hell of sin and wickedness; in his life he finds innumerable evils, sins of a crimson-die and scarlet-tincture staring him in the face; yea, his very Duties are not without sin, even in these there is abundance of pride, formality, unbelief, and the like: his very *righteousnesses are as filthy rags,* Isa. 64.4. If he looks unto the Law, there he reads his doom and condemnation in every line thereof; there he finds himself under the Curse; there he sees nothing but *fear, and blackness, and darkness, and tempests,* Heb. 12.18. If he looks to justice, that he finds as a flaming Sword keeping him from the Tree of Life, from all happiness: That appears with an angry

angry frowning countenance demanding ſatisfaction, as being infinitely wronged: But now in the midſt of all theſe diſcouragements, the poor Soul at length gets a ſight of Chriſt, in whom he ſees encouragement after all: He diſcovers land in a ſtorm, as it were, and finds in him a bottom to reſt his weary Spirit upon; in him he ſees that which can atone God, ſatisfie Juſtice, anſwer all the demands of the Law, fully deliver him from ſin and guilt, and make him both holy and happy for ever; and accordingly he reſts and rolls himſelf upon him, reſolving that if he dies, he will die thus leaning upon this Beloved.

III. An Act of Reſignation or Subjection: As in the Work of Faith the Soul thus chuſes Chriſt and depends upon him; ſo alſo he is by the Spirit of God made cordially and unreſervedly to reſign up himſelf unto him, to be ruled, governed, and diſpoſed of by him in his own way: The Soul now puts himſelf out of his own power and poſſeſſion, he paſſes himſelf away from himſelf, and he gives up himſelf into the power and poſſeſſion of Jeſus Chriſt to be ruled, governed, and ſaved by him as he ſees good: which is properly that Act of Faith which we call Reſignation; and this the Scripture often mentions, *One ſhall ſay I am the Lords*, Iſa. 44. 5. that is, he ſhall give or reſign up himſelf to the Lord to be for ever his, and at his diſpoſe: ſo 2 Cor. 8. 5. *They gave themſelves*

unto

unto the Lord; and Ephes. 5. 24. the Church is said to be *subject to Christ*: The Case seems to be this, there having many Treaties past in order to a Match between Christ and the Soul, the Soul at length, through the help of the Divine Spirit, is made freely to consent to take Christ for his onely Head and Husband, and to be subject to him in all things, to be perfectly and eternally at his dispose: His language now to Christ is like that of *Ahab* to *Benhadad*, 1 Kings 20. 4. *Behold I am thine, and all that I have is thine*: Sweet Lord Jesus, sayes the Soul, I have been my own, and have lived too much in mine own will, and to mine own ends and interests; but now I desire to be thine, and to live in thy Will, and to thine Ends; take possession of me, save me, rule me, lead me, dispose of me as thou pleasest; do all thy pleasure in me, pull down and set up what thou wilt, I'le be, and do, and suffer what thou wilt have me to be, and do, and suffer. And this is properly that Act of Faith, whereby we close with Christ as a Lord and King, and is indeed the evidence of the Truth of the two former; for you must know, that though Faith's first Aspect be to Christ as a Saviour, yet it comes to eye him as a Lord and King also: As Faith fully bottoms upon the satisfaction of Christ, so it freely bows to the Scepter of Christ; yea, when Faith can't challenge Christ as a Saviour, yet it will own Christ as a Lord: You know how *Laban* spake to *Abraham*'s Servant

vant upon the sight of the Ear-rings and Bracelets which he had given his Sister *Rebekah*, and upon his hearing a Relation from her of his Discourse with her, *Come in thou blessed of the Lord, why standest thou without? I have room for thee*, Gen. 24. 31. In like manner does the Soul speak to Christ upon the sight of that worth that is in him, and that need which he has of him, Come in thou blessed of the Lord, come in thou blessed Lord, why standest thou without? I have room for thee; I have room for thee in my Understanding, and I have room for thee in my Will and Affections; and I would have thee possess all, and command all: In a word, the Soul freely gives up himself to Christ's Holy and Spiritual Government. Thou art an Holy Christ, (says he) he who is to reign, and I resign up my self to thee, I'le have no Lord but thee; take the whole Throne to thy self within me; I know thy Yoke is an easie Yoke, and I desire to bear it; thy Scepter is a Righteous Scepter, and I desire to bow to it; thy Kingdom is a Kingdom of Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, and I heartily desire to come under the power of it. I would be Sanctified as well as Justified; I desire thy Spirit to subdue my corruptions for me, and to make me Holy, as well as thy Blood to wash away my guilt for me, and ingratiate me with thy self: and this is what the Scripture calls *an opening of the Gates, and a lifting up of the everlasting Doors, to let Christ the King*

King of Glory in, Psal 24. 7. Thus by these three, which indeed are the great uniting Acts of Faith, the Spirit of God enables the Soul to close with Christ in a Marriage-Covenant and Relation.

5. The Soul being thus enabled to believe, and so close with Christ in a Marriage-Covenant; then, as the Crown and perfection of all, the blessed Spirit of God takes up his abode, and dwells for ever in that Soul, as the Pledge and everlasting Bond of this Marriage-union and Relation between them. The sweet Spirit does not onely come, as a Friend, to treat about the Match, and also to tie the Marriage-Knot between Christ and us; but moreover, this being done, he remains himself in the Soul, as a Love-Token from Christ to him, as the Pawn and Pledge of this Espousal, and as the everlasting Bond and Confirmation of this Marriage-Union and Relation: Hence that of the Apostle, *He that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. one Spirit with the Lord he is joyned to; that Spirit which did joyn him to Christ, does remain in him and in Christ both: Christ leaves his own Spirit in his Spouses, as the Pledge and Bond of that Marriage-Union that is between him and them; so that he and they have the same Spirit dwelling in them; yet with this difference, he dwells in Christ without measure, in us by measure; in Christ immediately, by vertue of the personal Union, in us by his Gifts

Gifts and Graces; in Chriſt, as an Head, in us as members; and he with theſe are the Love-Tokens, the Pawns and Pledges of this Marriage-Troth plighted between Chriſt and us; and this indeed is that which makes this Union ſo ſtrong and inviolable, as that it can never be broken: Yea, not onely does he remain in the Soul as the Pledge and Bond of this Union, but alſo to deck and adorn the Soul with Grace, and to make him ready for the conſummation of the Marriage above: you know, when *Abraham*'s Servant ſaw that *Rebekah* conſented to be *Iſaac*'s Wife, he then gave her *Jewels of Silver, and Jewels of Gold, and rich Rayment*, Gen. 24. 53. So the bleſſed Spirit of God, having gained the Souls conſent to be eſpouſed to Chriſt, and the Marriage-Knot being tyed between them, now he dwells in the Soul to deck and adorn him; now he gives him Jewels of Gold and Silver, furniſhes and beautifies him with all Divine and Heavenly Graces; He dwells in him as an indeficient Spring and Fountain of all Grace and gracious diſpoſitions, till he has lodged him ſafe in the Arms and Boſom of his ſweet Husband above. Thus at length the Eſpouſal or Marriage-Relation is made up between Chriſt and the Soul; And oh how bleſſed is the Soul that is thus eſpouſed to him! I muſt ſay to ſuch a Soul, Bleſſed be the day that ever thou wert born; bleſſed the Womb that bear thee, and bleſſed the Paps which gave thee ſuck; bleſſed Goſpel which revealed

this

this sweet Christ to thee, and blessed Spirit that has tyed this happy Knot between him and thee.

CHAP. VI.

Being a Call to and Treaty with Souls, in order to an Espousal between Christ and them.

WEll, and what is the meaning of all this? Surely it should have a mighty influence upon the Spirits of men to draw and allure them to Christ, to induce them at least to look after an acquaintance with this blessed espousal to him; and indeed I would take occasion hence to treat with eternal Souls in order to a Match between Christ and them. And oh that I could do it effectually! Look, my Beloved, as *David* sent his Servants to *Abigail* to commune with her, in order to his taking of her to Wife, 1 *Sam.* 25. 39, 40. so has the Lord Jesus sent me, his poor unworthy Servant, to you this day to commune with you in order to the espousing of you to himself; and oh that you would do in this case as she did in that; for *she hasted* ('tis said) *and arose, and went to* David, *and became his Wife*, vers. 42. Oh that you would all arise, arise out of your sins, arise out of your unbelief, arise out of your carnal

carnal ſecurity, and go to Chriſt, and become his Spouſe: And not only ſo, but as ſhe did make haſte in the buſineſs, cloſe ſpeedily with him in a Marriage-Covenant, even to day: O bleſſed day, might I ſucceed as they did! How happy would it be for you? how comfortable for me? and how joyful for us all in the day of the Bridegrooms coming! Sirs, let me ſay, Oh that I might ſay of you, at leaſt ſome of you, as *Paul* of his *Corinthians* here, *I have eſpouſed you to one Husband, even to Chriſt*: And why ſhould it not be thus? Why ſhould you not ariſe, and go with me to ſweet Jeſus, and be eſpouſed unto him? Can you make light of all that Love, that Comfort, that Sweetneſs, that Happineſs, that bleſſed Union and Communion, that Delight, Solace, and Complacency of Soul which this Eſpouſal carries in it? Or, is there any thing can make up the loſs of theſe? Can Sin and the Creature afford any thing comparable hereunto? Surely there is more ſweetneſs, more happineſs, in one kiſs of the mouth of this bleſſed Lord, in one imbrace in his Boſom, one moments communion with him, than in all the delights of Sin and the Creature: If you doubt it, come and ſee, experienced Souls will tell you, that one deſcent of love from Chriſt, one beam of the light of his Countenance, one turn with him in his Galleries, is infinitely beyond all earthly delights whatſoever. Again, can you be content to die, and periſh eternally, rather than live, and be made happy in ſuch a

ſweet

sweet and desirable way as this of being espoused to Christ is? A more sweet and desirable way of being made happy than this of an espousal to Christ, surely neither Men nor Angels could ever have thought on. And can you, O eternal Souls, be content to die, to perish, to be damned and miserable for ever, rather than be saved and made happy this way? If you get not Union with, and a Marriage-Relation to this sweet Lord, you must die and perish for ever; *Know you not* (sayes the Apostle) *that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates,* 2 Cor. 13. 5. If Christ be not in us we are certainly reprobates, we are rejected of God, and out of his favour, and then surely we must perish. Naturally we are all dead, all lost, all condemned; *Judgment is come upon all men to condemnation,* Rom. 5. 18. and *we are all the children of wrath by nature,* Ephes. 2. 3. And if ever we be justified and saved, it must be by a Marriage-Union and Relation to Christ. *There is no condemnation,* (sayes the Apostle) or as the words are, nothing of condemnation *to them that are in Christ Jesus,* Rom. 8. 1. But, as is there implyed, there is nothing but condemnation to them that are out of Christ Jesus. Once more, can you be content to be shut out from the Marriage at last for ever? Think of that Scripture, and bear the dread of it if you can, *Matth.* 25. 10. *And they that were ready went into the Marriage, and the door was shut,* shut against others who then would fain enter: To be

shut

shut out from the Marriage-Supper at last, is to be shut out from God, from Christ, from the Comforter, from all the Saints and Angels, from all happiness, yea, and from all hopes of happiness for ever: and thus you must expect to be shut out from the Marriage at last, if you come not into an espousal to him here: And can you bear it, think you? Can you be content to hear Christ say unto you at last, *Depart from me, depart?* You would have none of me on earth, though I wooed and besought you with tears; and therefore now you shall have none of me in Heaven: you might have been happy in a union and communion with me, and the arms of my love were open to have received you; but you would not, therefore now *depart from me, I know you not*: And can you bear this? Besides, what is it that keeps your Soul from a close with Christ in this Marriage-Relation? A vain World, a filthy Lust, a painted perishing Pleasure, a sensual Appetite: And are these better than Christ? Are these indeed things to be laid in the Ballance by you against Christ, yea, and to down-weigh him in your values? O monstrous stupidity! In short, Sirs, the Matter I am treating with you about is no trifle, 'tis of no less moment and importance to you, than eternal Life or Death, eternal Salvation or Damnation comes to; your eternal All depends upon it, for you must live or die, be saved or damned eternally, according as you do, or do not close in with

Christ in a Marriage-Union and Relation here: Why then should you stand off from him? Yea, why should not this be the day of espousals between him and you? Oh, be not shie, be not coy to Christ, but embrace his love: surely his Arms are wide open to receive you, his Heart is upon you, and his desire is towards you; *Lift up therefore the everlasting Doors, and let this King of Glory in:* Give up your Names and Souls unto him for ever. Some of you are young, and have your Affections green and fresh: Oh that you would now go with me to sweet Jesus, and become his Spouse; you cannot love him, nor be married to him too soon: Oh, let him have your hearts before this World hath defiled and debauched them: Others of you are older, and have outstood the Calls and Offers of Christ long; yet loe, he once more tenders himself to you: Oh now close with him, and all will be well yet. But for the better succeeding of this Treaty, I shall, in the managing of it, speak to three things. (1.) I'le shew you what manner of Husband the Lord Jesus Christ is, and how he is qualified to render him desirable in that Relation. (2.) I'le shew you what great things he does for all his Spouses. (3.) I'le shew you how much his heart is upon a Match with you. And now as *Abraham*'s Servant, when he was to get a Wife for *Isaac*, Prayed saying, *O Lord God of my Master* Abraham, *send me good speed this day*, Gen. 24. 12. So would I, up-

on

on the bended knees of my Soul pray, O Lord God, the God and Father of my Royal Maſter, Jeſus Chriſt, ſend me good ſpeed this day, that I may win, through thy Grace, a Spouſe for him.

CHAP. VII.

Which ſhews what manner of Husband Chriſt is, and how qualified for the endearing of him to Souls, and rendering him deſirable in a Conjugal-Relation.

WHat is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou doſt ſo charge us? So the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* ſpake unto the Spouſe, *Cant.* 5. 9. In like manner may ſome ſay to me; Who, or what is this Chriſt, that you do ſo preſs us to an eſpouſal with him? What is there in him to render him deſirable to us? Who, or what is he? Truly I can't tell, nor could I, had I the tongue of Men and Angels; and I am almoſt afraid to ſpeak of him, leſt I ſhould darken his Glory inſtead of diſplaying it: This I am ſure of, He is (as one ſpeaks of him) Earths Wonder, and Heavens Wonder both; and has all that in him, and that in infinite eminency and perfection, that ſhould render him grateful and deſirable to Souls

in a Conjugal-Relation: Look therefore upon him, and view him a little, and see if there be any thing you can desire in such a Relation, that is wanting in him. I'le lay this more fully before you in these following Particulars.

I. Are you for Dignity and Greatness? This goes far among men, and makes many a Match: for this, none like Christ, none so great, so glorious, so honourable as he: pray view him a little: As to his descent, *He came forth from God*, viz. by eternal Generation, and is the eternal Son of the Eternal Father, *John* 16. 28. View him in his Person, and there you will see nothing but greatness; for he is no other than God-Man, and has all the excellencies of both Natures in one Person: He is *Emmanuel*, *God with us*, God in our Nature, *Mat.* 1. 23. He is *God*, Heb. 1. 8. *The true God*, John 5. 20. *The great God*, Titus 2. 13. *The mighty God*, Isa. 9. 6. *God over all, or the most high God*, Rom. 9. 5. *God equal with the Father*, having the same Divine Essence, and Essential Perfections in him, that the Father hath in him, *Phil.* 2. 6. *He is the brightness of his Fathers Glory, and the express Character of his Person*; one, in whom the whole Majesty, Luster, and Glory of the Father shines forth; one, on whom the Father has engraven all his eternal Excellencies, *Heb.* 1. 3. Some small Beams

Qui in his Verbis clarè asserit æternam Christi divinitatem non videt, profectò cæcus est. Calv. in locum.

Beams and Rayes of God's Glory do shine forth in the Saints and Angels; but in Christ the Fulness, Lustre, and Brightness of it appears. View him in his Office and Relation, with the Dignity that even here he is advanced unto: He is a King, a great King, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Rev. 19. 6. *King of Saints*, Rev. 15. 3. *King of Nations*, Jer. 10. 7. *King of Glory*, Psal. 24. 7. *He is the head of all Principalities and Powers*; and 'tis their glory that they have such an Head, *Col.* 2. 10. *He is the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts*, Zech. 13. 7. *He is the first-born of God, higher than the Kings of the Earth*, Psal. 89. 27. *He is set down at Gods own right hand in heavenly places, far above all Principalities, and Powers, and Might, and Dominion*, Ephes. 1. 20. *He is made higher than the Heavens*, Heb. 7. 26. Among all Persons, and in all Things, whether in Heaven or Earth, he has the preheminence, *Col.* 1. 18. Such is his greatness, that the whole Creation is bound to perform Homage and Worship to him, the Angels themselves not excepted: *Let all the Angels of God worship him*, says the Father, *Heb.* 1. 6. Phil. 2. 9, 10. *God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth*; i. e. Angels as well as Men must perform

Pater totam suam essentiam & majestatem filio a se ab æterno genito, intimè quasi inseuluerit, & seipsum in filio quasi effigiâverit, ut sit substantialis imago ejus. Glas. Rh. Sac.

form worship to him: And indeed, a refusal so to do, would turn Angels into Devils: He is to be loved, feared, believed on, obeyed, prayed unto, praised, admired, and delighted in by all; He is to have equal honour from all with the Father; *All must honour the Son, as they honour the Father*, Joh. 5. 23. What shall I say? He has the sovereign Lordship and disposal both of Grace and Glory in his hand; *The Son quickeneth whom he will*, John 5. 21. He sayes unto one, Live, and he lives; and to another, Live, and he lives, and the rest of the dead live not: *He has the Keys of Death and Hell*, Rev. 1. 18. He has the Government of the whole World in his hand; *His Kingdom ruleth over all*, Psalm. 103. 19. He is in full possession of a Kingdom over the whole Creation, *all Judgment being committed to him*, John 5. 22. And O how glorious is he in the whole of it! "Glorious in his Throne, which is at the right "hand of God, *Heb.* 1. 3. Glorious in his "Commission, which is all power in Heaven "and Earth, *Matth.* 28. 18. Glorious in "his Scepter, which is a Scepter of Righteousness, *Psal.* 45. 6. Glorious in his Attendants, ten thousand times ten thousand "of his Holy Ones, even thousands of Angels, *Dan.* 7. 10. Glorious in his way of "Rule, full of Grace and sweetness towards "his People, full of terror and majesty towards his Enemies, his Arrows being sharp "in their hearts, *Psal.* 45. 5. And as he governs all now, so he will judge all at last; and

and all muſt ſtand or fall, live or die, be ſaved or damned for ever, according to what Sentence he ſhall paſs upon them, *Acts* 17.31. *Rom.* 14. 10. O how great is this Lord! and how worthy to be imbraced by us! O Sirs, will you deny ſo great, ſo glorious a Perſon, when he makes love to you? Should you ſee ſome great Prince wooing a Beggar in Rags upon the Dunghil, you would wonder to ſee her ſlight him, and make him wait time after time upon her: Why there is an infinitely greater Perſon than the greateſt of Kings, that wooes you and ſollicites you for your love: And will you yet be ſhie of him, and make him wait? Will you refuſe him? Then wonder at your own ſordid ingratitude.

II. Are you for Riches and Treaſures? This ſwayes with moſt: for this none like Chriſt, he has Riches as well as Greatneſs to recommend him to you; *Riches and Honour are with me*, Prov. 8. 18. Yea, and his Riches are the beſt ſort; his are Spiritual Riches, *Treaſures in Heaven*, Matth. 6. 20. Riches of Life and Love, Peace and Pardon, Grace and Glory, Righteouſneſs and Salvation, Riches of Glory, and Riches in Glory: And O what poor things are the Riches of this World to theſe? His are *true Riches*, Luke 16. 11. The riches of this World are but painted riches, his are ſubſtantial Riches; *I will cauſe them that love me, to inherit Subſtance*, Prov. 8. 21. The riches of this World

are vain, *they are not*, Prov. 23. 5. But the Riches of Christ have a reality in them; His are lasting and durable Riches; *Riches and Honour are with me, yea durable Riches and Righteousness*, Prov. 8. 18. Worldly riches are perishing and uncertain things, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. Now we enjoy them, but all of a suddain they are gone and disappear; but Christs are eternal Riches for an eternal Soul: And as his Riches are thus of the best sort, so he has great abundance of them; his Riches are boundless and unsearchable: *To me* (sayes *Paul*) *it is given to preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ*, Ephes. 3. 8. *He is Heir of all things*, Heb. 1. 2. All the Treasures of Heaven and Earth are his: *He has all fulness dwelling in him*, Col. 1. 19. even all the fulness of the God-head, whole God dwells in him; He has enough to supply all our wants, and to answer all our desires: Do we want Grace? *He is full of Grace*, John 1. 14. Do we want Life? *With him is the Fountain of Life*, Psal. 36. 9. Do we want Redemption, redemption from Sin, from Death, from Hell, from Wrath? *With him is plenteous Redemption*, Psal. 130. 7. Do we want Peace? He gives peace; *My Peace I give unto you*, Joh. 14. 27. Do we want Righteousness; *He has fulfilled all Righteousness*, he is become *the Lord our Righteousness*, Jer. 23. 6. Now will you reject this rich Lord? You are poor, and miserable, and naked; and will you not embrace this Christ, tendering himself with all these Riches to you? O how justly then will

will you perish for ever! O that there were some covetous Soul here this day, that would be taken with the Riches of Christ.

III. Are you for Bounty, for a noble and generous Spirit? That's desirable in such a Relation, and takes much with many; for this also, none like Christ: He is a bountiful Lord, of a noble and generous Spirit, as well as Rich: Many a Man has riches enough, but has a base, narrow, covetous Spirit; and so his Wife has little of them; but Christ has a noble, generous, bountiful heart: He is not only rich, but he is also willing to lay out all his Riches & Treasures upon his Spouses: All the Treasures of his Love and Grace, all the Treasures of his Righteousness and Consolation: He would have them abundantly filled, abundantly comforted, abundantly enriched for ever: What a generous Spirit towards them does he express, *Cant.* 5. 1. *Eat, O Friends; Drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved:* As if he should say, I have enough, infinitely enough for you, and I would have you to have enough, I would have you to have your Souls full of all Good: He would have them to have full Graces, full Joyes, full Comforts, and full Happiness for ever; *These things speak I unto you,* (sayes he) *that your joy may be full,* John 15. 11. And again, *Ask, that you may receive, that your joy may be full,* John 16. 24. He wills them like happiness with himself: Like love and embraces in the Fathers Bosom, *Joh.* 17. 24, 26.

Like

Like Grace and Holiness, *John* 17. 22. O what a noble, generous, bountiful heart has this sweet Lord towards his Spouse! Soul, shall it not draw and allure thee to him? Nothing will satisfie him less than their participating with him in his own blessedness; Soul, if thou rejectest this bountiful Lord, know, that he has Treasures of Wrath and Vengeance also, which he will plentifully pour out upon thee for ever.

IV. Are you for Wisdom and Knowledge? Wisdom and Knowledge render a person lovely and desirable; 'tis indeed one of a persons highest excellencies and perfections: for this also none like Christ; *He is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. The infinite Wisdom of the Eternal God does shine forth in him and through him: Yea, *in him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, Col. 2. 3. Which may be understood Actively as well as Passively, he knowing all, as well as having all that is worth knowing in him; *He is the only wise God*, Jude 25. There is no true wisdom but in him, and there is no true wisdom to be had but by him and from him; he is often in Scripture called *Wisdom*, to note that infinite wisdom that is in him: He knows all Persons and all Things; he knows the Father, and that, as he is known of him, *Joh.* 10. 15. He knows the Mind and Will of the Father; hence said *to be in his Bosom*, which is the place of Secrets, as well as Love, *Joh.* 1. 18.

1. 18. He knows all his Fathers Counsels and Decrees, which have been of old touching the Salvation and Damnation of Man: Hence we read of *the Lambs Book of Life, and Names written therein*, Rev. 13. 8. He knows all the Works of God the Father; *The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him whatsoever he doth*, John 5. 20. He knows the Attributes and Perfections of God, and he only, *Matth.* 11. 27. *John* 4. 56. He knows the whole Word of God, being himself *the Word*, Joh. 1. 1. 'Tis observed by one, that the Angels themselves do not know all the Word of God, but Christ does: And as he thus knows God, and the Things of God, so he also knows Man, and the Things of Man; *He knows all men, and what is in them*, John 2. 24, 25. He knows the State, the Spirits, the Frames, the Thoughts, the Ends, the Counsels, the Wayes, the Wants, the Burthens, the Temptations of all: In a word, he is infinite in Wisdom and Counsel, and he knows perfectly, as how to promote his own Glory, so how to defend, save, and comfort his Spouses, and carry on their happiness in the best way: O who would not have such an Husband! Soul, if thou reject him, know, that his Wisdom will fight against thee; and he does know how to damn and destroy for ever.

V. Are you for Beauty? That takes with most; for this none like Christ: For Beauty and Comelineſs, he infinitely surpasses both

Men

Men and Angels. We read of *Moses*, that he was *exceeding fair*; and of *David*, that he was *ruddy, and of a beautiful countenance*; and *Josephus* reports of the one of them, that all that saw him, were amazed at, and enamoured on his beauty. O but what was their beauty to Christs? Were their beauty, and with theirs, the beauty of Men and Angels put together, it would all be nothing to the Beauty of Christ: Not so much as the light of a Farthing-Candle is to the light of the Sun at noon-day: He is *Beautiful and Glorious*, Isa. 4. 2. Was *Moses* fair? Christ is infinitely more fair: *He is fairer than the Children of Men*, Psal. 45. 2. And had you an eye to behold his Beauty, you could not but be amazed at it, and enamoured on it: Was *David* ruddy, and of a beautiful Countenance? See what the Spouse says of Christ, *Cant.* 5. 10. *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand*: which notes the perfection of his Beauty; and therefore she concludes all with this, (having spoken of the Beauty of his several parts) *He is altogether lovely*, vers. 16. or he is all loveliness: as if she should say, What do I do? there is no end of his beauty and amiableness; there is nothing in him but what is lovely, and there is nothing lovely but what is in him; neither is there any thing in the whole Creation, that has beauty and amiableness enough in it to be a shadow and resemblance of his beauty and amiableness. *O fair Sun* (sayes *Rutherford*) *and fair Moon, and fair*

Stars, and fair Flowers, and fair Roſes, and fair Lillies; but O ten thouſand thouſand times fairer Lord Jeſus! Alas, I have wronged him (ſayes he) *in making the compariſon this way: O black Sun and Moon! but O fair Lord Jeſus! O black Flowers, and black Lillies and Roſes! but O fair, fair, ever fair Lord Jeſus! O black Heaven! but O fair Chriſt! O black Angels! but O ſurpaſſingly fair Lord Jeſus!* In ſhort, Divines obſerve that there is ſomewhat in Chriſt more amiable than Salvation; and indeed there are thoſe Heart-indearing Beauties, thoſe Soul-raviſhing excellencies in the perſon of this Beloved, that are unſpeakably beyond Salvation it ſelf: He is the brightneſs, the luſtre, the ſhining forth *of his Fathers Glory*, Heb. 1. 2. O who would not be raviſhed with, and enamoured on his Beauty? A ſmall ſight and report thereof ſet the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* a ſeeking after him, *Cant.* 6. 1. And ſhall it have no influence upon you to draw and allure you to him? Does one ſo fair and beautiful make love to ſuch black and deformed Creatures as you and I are, and ſhall we refuſe him? Shall we reject this lovely Lord? O that his Beauty might enamour us!

VI. Are you for Love, as well as Loveliness? for a ſweet, kind, loving Diſpoſition? This is deſirable to all, for this alſo none like Chriſt: He is of a moſt ſweet, loving, tender, affable Diſpoſition: He indeed

Deus est totus amor, totus amabilis, & totus amans nostri. Dix.

deed is love it self, kindness it self, tenderness and compassion it self: *God is love*, 1 Joh. 4. 16. His love to his Spouses has all dimensions, *heights, breadths, depths, lengths* in it; *Yea, it passes Knowledg*, Ephes. 3. 18, 19. which shews the immensity and unmeasurableness of his love; as if he should say of it, 'tis higher than Heaven, and deeper than the Sea; 'tis broader than the Orb of the Earth, and longer than all Time, during throughout Eternity; yea, and it passes Knowledge. There are two things which exceed our knowledge; our Sins, and Christs Love; the one is almost, the other is altogether boundless, and bottomless. Though a man has never so many accomplishments to commend him, yet if he be of a rough, crabbed, soure disposition, this renders him unacceptable for such a Relation: But to all his other perfections, Christ has this added, That he is infinitely loving as well as lovely, and of a most kind, tender disposition to his Spouses. Hence we read in Scripture of his Love, his Kindness, his Meekness, his Gentleness, and the like; all noting the admirable sweetness and amiableness of his Disposition: he wept over his very enemies, even them that finally refused him, *Luk.* 19. 41, 42. Yea, he had a kindness for his Murtherers, and prayed for them, and that whilst they

Mensurationi isthac, dilectionis illius immensurabilitatem & immensitatem indicat Apostolus. Glas. Rhet. Sac.

were

were murthering of him; yea, and his Prayer carried many of them to Heaven, *Luke* 23. 34. O what love, what kindness then must he have for his Spouses? He that has love for Enemies, and such love, what must he have for his Friends? 'Tis a sweet gloss which one of the Ancients has upon the place last quoted, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do: This* (sayes he) *is a Word becoming the eternal Word, the Word of the eternal Father; he prayes not onely for his Persecutors and Reproachers, but even for his Murtherers, improving all his interest in his Father for them; saying, in effect, Father I intreat thee, by that fatherly love thou hast for me, and by which we are one, hear me for these my Murtherers in forgiving of them, own the love of thy Son, that thou mayest pardon his enemies.* O what kindness does this argue? In a word, his love is as an Ocean, which has neither brim nor bottom; neither can he but be kind to his: *The Law*, indeed, *of kindness* (as 'tis said of the good Wife, *Prov.* 31. 26.) *is in his lips*; yea, and in his heart and carriages too, all being full of love: Oh! that his love might draw you: Surely no love like his love, none so full, none so free, none so sweet, none so fruitful, none so ravishing, none so lasting; his love, where he loves, never fails, nor

Pater ignosce illis. O Verbum summi Patris Verbo convenientes! orat non solum pro persequentibus & calumniantibus; sed etiam pro occidentibus: sed & Pater inquit, q. d. Per dilectionem Paternam qua unum sumus, supplico tibi, ut exaudias me pro his occisoribus meis, ignoscendo; agnosce Filii tui amicitiam ut inimicis ignoscam. Bern. de pass. Dom.

nor can it ever be broken off; *Who shall separate us* (sayes the Apostle) *from the love of Christ?* That is, nothing can separate us from his love, *Neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any thing else can do it*, Rom. 8. 35, 38, 39. And I think, sayes an Holy Man, his unchangable love hath said unto me, I defie thee to break me or change me: Oh sirs, experienced Souls will tell you, how sweet, and good, and rich Christ's love is: They will tell you, one sight, one taste of it, makes Heaven in the Soul; that *'tis better than Wine*, Cant. 1. 2. And will you reject him and his love too? Will you pour contempt upon so much kindness? O how justly then will you perish under his wrath? He has wrath in him, as well as love; wrath for Enemies, as well as love for his Spouses; and his wrath is as hot and terrible, as his love is sweet and comfortable; yea, his love will, if rejected by you, turn into wrath, and no wrath like that that is the result of abused love: Oh therefore close, close with Christ this day.

VII. Are you for a Person of esteem, one that is much valued and beloved? An ingenious Soul would desire this: and for this none like Christ: As there is none so kind and loving as he, so there is none so much valued and beloved as he: He is beloved by all whose love is worth the having; He is highly

highly valued and beloved by all the Saints both in Heaven and Earth; the Saints in Heaven they admire and adore him; 'tis a part of their happineſs to love him, and delight in him for ever: and the Saints on Earth, they love and value him above all others whatever; he is the dearly Beloved of their Souls: How often does the Spouſe call him her Beloved, and her Well-Beloved? And once and again, ſhe declares her ſelf ſick of love to him; ſhe is enamoured on him; he is indeed *the deſire of all Nations*, Hag. 2. 7. That is to ſay, He whom all the faithful in all Nations do love, deſire, and delight in: Hence alſo that of the *Apoſtle*, *to you that believe he is precious*, 1 Pet. 2. 7. The Saints love and value Chriſt above all their Natural or Creature-Enjoyments, above Father, and Mother, Husband, and Wife, and Children, and Houſes, and Lands, and the like: So much is intimated *Mat.* 10. 37. & 19. 29. they love and value him above all their Spiritual Attainments, *accounting them but Dung for Chriſt*, Phil. 3. 8. They love and value him above their lives, being *ready to die for him*, Acts 21. 13. Rev. 12. 11. Oh how dear is Chriſt to Saints? He is alſo highly valued and beloved by all the Holy Angels: He is the great object of their Love and Admiration: Hence he is ſaid to be *ſeen of Angels*, that is, to be beloved and delighted in by Angels, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. The bleſſed Angels do ſee that in Chriſt, which does enamour them on him, and fill them with love to

him, and delight in him; yea, which does fill them with perpetual admirings and adorings of him, *Rev.* 5. 12. Yea, which is more than all this, He is infinitely valued and beloved by God the Father also: The blessed God sees that in Christ that renders him infinitely amiable and desireable in his Eye, and to his Soul; both as Son, and also as Mediator, he is even infinitely dear and precious to the Father: As he is the Son of God, the Son of the Father, as the Apostles expression is, so is he the Darling and Delight of the Fathers Soul, and was so from all eternity; so much he himself tells us, *Prov.* 8. 30. So he is the infinite and eternal Favorite of the infinite and eternal Father; so he is one in essence with the Father, and accordingly must be infinitely dear to the Father: Hence he is said *to be in the Fathers bosom*, and as Son, he was so from eternity, *John* 1. 18. Now the Bosom is the seat of Love, and his being in his Fathers Bosom, notes that strong, ardent, intimate love which the Father has for him; yea, even as Mediator the Father loves him, *John* 3. 35. Yea, he loves him with a choice, a signal, and an eminent love, with a love of the highest strain, the choicest excellency, the sweetest influence; a love that has a stamp of special glory upon it: Hence he is called *the Beloved*, Ephes. 1. 6. *He hath made*

Filius in sinu Patris est. 1. In aeterna generatione. 2. In arctissima unitate. 3. In ardentissima dilectione. 4. In secretissimorum communicatione. Glass. Rhet. Sac.

made us accepted in the Beloved, that is, in Christ, who is most dear to God: Hence God calls him *his beloved Son, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,* Mat. 3. 17. Yea, he is called the Son of his Love; *he hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,* the Greek is the Son of his Love, *Col.* 1. 13. Yea, the Father proclaims him to be the delight of his Soul: *Behold* (saith he) *my Servant whom I have chosen, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth,* Isa. 42. 1. What shall I say? God loves himself infinitely, and next to himself he loves Christ and delights in him: 'tis true, he loves all the works of his hands as such, especially rational Creatures; and among them, he has a peculiar love for his Saints and the Holy Angels; but he loves Christ unspeakably more than all: He indeed is first Beloved, and most Beloved, and best Beloved by him of all others. God, as the School-men observe, does love the very flesh or Humane Nature of Christ more than all the Angels: In a word, he loves him so, as that he is even ravished with him, and he can't but love all that are in him, or related by Covenant to him; and that though altogether

ἐν τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ: i. e. *in Filio sibi gratissimo & dilectissimo.* Zanch.

Filium dilectionis, i. e. *Filium dilectissimum.* Daven. in loc.

Omnia diligit Deus quæ fecit, & inter ea magis diligit creaturas rationales, & in illis eas amplius quæ sunt membra unigeniti sui, & multo magis ipsum filium unigenitum. Aug.

Naturam humanam assumptam a Dei Verbo in Personâ Christi, Deus plus amat quam omnes Angelos. Aqui.

gether unlovely in themselves. Now, Sirs, will you not love and embrace this beloved one, one that is thus valued and beloved by Saints, by Angels, and by God the Father? And let me say, one that is hated and despised by none but Devils and devilish ones: Soul, if thou reject him, whom all the Saints and Angels love, admire, and adore; then never expect to live with them in the fruition of him, but reckon upon living with Devils and damned spirits in Hell for ever: If thou reject him whom the Father loves and delights in, then expect to be rejected both by him and the Father for ever; but, Soul, rather be prevailed with to love him too.

VIII. Are you for Immortality, for one that lives for ever? This added to the rest is desirable; and for this none like Christ: Yea, none but Christ, he and he alone is a never-dying Husband; the best Husband here below is mortal, and may leave you in a moment; but Christ is immortal, *he is the King immortal, eternal*, 1 Tim. 1. 17. *and he only hath immortality*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. He, and he onely lives for evermore: *Behold I live for evermore*, (sayes he) *Rev.* 1. 18. He will never leave you in the desolate state of Widdow-hood; yea, not onely does he live for ever himself, but moreover he makes all his Spouses to live for ever too: So you find John 11. 25, 26. *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, (sayes he) *he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and*

whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Oh what an Husband is this! an Husband that lives for ever himself, and that makes his Spouses live for ever too; he gives all his Spouses such a life as never dies, an immortal life. In a word, close with him, and as he will live for ever, as thy Husband, so thou shalt live for ever as his Spouse. Oh who would not accept of such a Person? Soul, if thou receivest him, know, he lives for ever, to love thee, to comfort thee, to delight thee, to make thee happy in and with himself; but if thou rejectest him, know, that he lives for ever to punish thee, to inflict wrath and vengance upon thee, and to make thee compleatly miserable; but oh reject him not. Thus I have shewn you a little what an Husband Christ is to his Spouses; and upon the whole, I would say to you as the Spouse did to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, Cant. 5. 16. *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend*; this is he that offers himself to your embraces, surely he is no mean, no despicable Person, but one infinitely desirable. Now, what do you say? will you have him, or will you not? possibly this is the last tender he will ever make of himself to you; possibly the Match must be made now or never; therefore now close with him, accept him upon his own terms, who surely is worthy of all acceptation.

CHAP. VIII.

Which shews what great things Christ does for all his Spouses.

TRue, may some say, Christ's Person is desirable; but what will he do for his Spouses? What may our Souls expect from him, in case we should close up with him in a Marriage-Covenant? What will he do? What will he not do for you? Surely he acts like himself, and does great things for all his Spouses: And oh happy, happy they that are indeed espoused unto him! I shall, for the more effectual drawing of poor Souls to him, shew you what he does for his Spouses in these following Particulars.

I. He payes all their Debts.
II. He supplies all their Wants.
III. He heals all their Maladies.
IV. He bears all their Burthens.
V. He sweetens all their Afflictions.
VI. He subdues all their Enemies.
VII. He minds and manages all their Concerns.
VIII. He enjoynters them in eternal Life and Glory.

I. He payes all their Debts, fully discharging

changing their Souls from all Sin and Guilt. No sooner is a Woman married to an Husband, but presently all her Debts become his; he payes all, at least is lyable so to do: In like manner, no sooner is a Soul espoused to Christ, but all his Debts to Law and Justice become Christs, and he pays all: And O how great a thing is this! Friends, we are all in debt, deeply in debt to the Law and Justice of God: We owe each one of us more than our ten thousand Talents, *Matth.* 18. 24. We lie under whole Mountains of Sin and Guilt: The truth is, our first Father left us and all his Posterity in debt; we brought Sin and Guilt into the World with us, and the first day we were born, Divine Justice might have arrested us, and have cast us into the dismal Prison of utter darkness. *I came of those Parents* (sayes one of the Ancients) *who made me damned before I was born; they sinned, & got me a sinner in their sin.* And to the same purpose another of them speaks, *No man is free from sin* (sayes he) *in the sight of God, not an Infant of a day old.* And to give you a greater authority than these, the Holy Apostle asserts the same thing, *Rom.* 5. 12. *By one man sin entered into the World, and death by sin; and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Adam sinned, and we all sinned in him,

De Parentibus illis venio, qui me ante fecerunt damnatum quam natum: peccatores peccatorem in peccato suo genuerunt. Bern. de amore Dei.

Nemo mundus a peccato coram, te Domine, nec Infans cujus est unus diei vita super terram. Aug. in Conf.

we all being in him, as in a common Head; and the guilt of the act of his sin is as truly ours, as if we had each one of us acted it in our own persons; and we all stand justly condemned for it. Hence also, *vers.* 18. he tells us, That *by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.* Besides, we have all contracted a vast Debt upon our selves, and do lie under much actual guilt, and that of a scarlet-dye and crimson-tincture: Alas, we have done little but sin'd ever since we came into the World; and indeed, as long as we are out of Christ, either all we do is sin, or at least we sin in all we do: We are every day running upon new Scores, adding sin to sin, and guilt to guilt: And O how great then must our Debts to Law and Justice needs be? You look upon that man to be deeply in debt indeed, whose Debts are so many and great, as that he can neither know nor count them: And thus it is with us, so many and so great are our Sins, and consequently our Debts to Law and Justice, that we can neither know nor count them. *David*, though an holy Man, cries out, *Who can understand his errors?* Psal. 19. 12. Alas, who of us can count the sins of one day? they pass our knowledge: And which is worse still, we are under a necessity, whilst in our natural state, of encreasing our sin and guilt every day and hour. Now how shall all this Debt be paid, this Sin and Guilt be expiated and done away? Why only by Christ, close with him

him in a Marriage-Covenant, and your Souls are discharged from all. Justice, that stands upon Satisfaction, it calls for full payment; its language is, Pay, or perish; pay, or be damned; and nothing have we of our own to pay the least of all our Debts, nor can we possibly right God for the wrong we have done him by the least sin; and, which adds to our misery, we are every day in danger of Arrests, nor know we how soon Justice will by the hand of that grim Sergeant, Death, clap an Arrest upon us, and cast us into Prison, whence there is no redemption, until we have paid the utmost farthing, which can never be, *Matth.* 5. 26. Now sinner, wouldst thou have thy Debts paid, thy Sins Pardoned, and thy Soul freed from the danger of those Arrests? then give up thy self to Christ in a Marriage-Covenant: O this is the only way to discharge all. Christ says to Justice concerning all his Spouses, as *Paul* sometimes did to *Philemon* concerning *Onesimus*; *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee any thing, put that upon my account*: So says Christ to God concerning thee immediately upon thy close with him; Father, if this Soul hath wronged thee, and oweth thee any thing, place it on my account, I have taken all his Debts upon me, I'le be responsible to thee for all; Father, this Soul I bled and dyed for, this Soul I was made sin and a curse for, whereby thy Justice is fully satisfied; let him therefore be discharged. O Soul, how should this draw thee to Christ?

Canst thou be content to lie under so great a Debt? And is it a small thing to thee to be in danger of so terrible an Arrest as that of Justice, which we have spoken of, is? Suppose a man owed ten thousand pounds, and had nothing wherewith to pay, and he saw himself in danger every moment of being cast into Prison; how sad wouldst thou look upon his case to be? and how gladly, thinkest thou, would he embrace an offer from any to discharge him from all? Soul, thy case is ten thousand times more sad, and how gladly shouldst thou embrace the Lord Jesus, who would, and who alone can discharge all for thee: In short, we read of *Spirits already in Prison*, 1 Pet. 3. 19. Justice has already clapt its Arrest upon thousands and ten thousands, and lodg'd them in the Prison of eternal darkness; and what canst thou expect from it, but to be dealt with in the like manner speedily, unless thou closest with Christ, as thy Righteousness, to make satisfaction for thee? His Righteousness is such, as makes a full satisfaction, and is every way answerable to the strictest demands of Law and Justice; and by it, he being closed withal by thee, all thy Debts are paid at once.

II. He supplies all their Wants, and makes blessed provision for them: 'Tis the part of an Husband to supply the wants of his Wife, and to make provision for her: And this Christ does for all his Spouses; *he supplies all their needs according to his riches in glory:*

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They have Wants, and he has Fulnes; they have Needs, and he has Riches; and he brings his Fulnes to their Wants, and freely communicates of the one to the other. Truly we are full of Wants of all sorts, Wants in the Soul, and Wants in the Body. *We are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked*, Rev. 3. 17. Yea, our Wants are such, and so pinching upon us, that with the Prodigal, we are even *perishing with hunger*, Luke 15. 17. Even the Saints themselves are *a poor and needy people*, full of wants, *Isa.* 40. 17. Now how shall these Wants be supplyed? Only by Christ, and to but close with him, and he will supply all plentifully: Let it be but a day of Espousals between Christ and you, and all your Wants are supplyed for ever. The truth is, Christ is all. He is the great All, (as one calls him) Heaven and Earth, Time and Eternity, Grace and Glory are all in one Christ. He supplies the Spiritual Wants of his Spouses. Do you want Life? *He that hath the Son, hath Life*, 1 Joh. 5. 12. Do you want Grace? Close with Christ and he will give you Grace, abundance of Grace, *John* 1. 16. Do you want Peace? Close with Christ and he will give you Peace, *John* 14. 27. Do you want Strength and Righteousnes, Righteousnes for Justification, and Strength for Sanctification and Obedience? Close with Christ and he will supply you with abundance of both, *Isa.* 45. 24. Do you want Joy and Consolation? Close with Christ, and he will in due season

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fill you with joy and consolation, he will comfort your hearts, 1 *Thes.* 2. 16, 17. He supplies all the outward Wants also of his Spouses, and that so as that they want no good thing, *Psal.* 34. 10. They want no outward good thing; but what the want thereof is better for them, than the enjoyment of it would be: True, they may, and often have but a little of outward Comforts; but yet then they have much in a little, much Love, much Blessing, much of Christ and the Covenant: And therefore *a little which they have, is said to be better than the riches of many wicked,* Psalm 37. 16. Besides, wherein they are cut short in Temporals, Christ often makes it up to them in Spirituals: They are *poor in this World, but rich in Faith,* Jam. 2. 5. They have not much of the Streams, it may be, but they have the more of the Fountain; more love, and the sweeter communion with Christ: In a word, what-ever either Heaven or Earth affords, so far as they need it, they shall have it: *The Lord will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly,* Psal. 84. 9. O who would not close with this Christ? Soul, why standest thou off from him? Is there any can supply thy Wants but he? Is there any can give thee Life, and Peace, and Pardon, and Righteousness, and Salvation, but he? Or hadst thou rather die in thy Wants, than come to this Fountain to be supplyed? Hadst thou ra-

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ther perish in thine own poverty, than come to this Treasury to be enriched?

III. He heals all their Wounds, and cures all their Maladies: He is a Physician to his Spouses, and such a Physician, as that though the Wound be never so deep, and the Disease never so desperate, yet he never fails to work the Cure for them: O how should this allure us to him? We, my Beloved, have our Wounds as well as our Wants; we are full of Maladies and Diseases of Soul: The truth is, *from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, there is no soundness in us*, Isa. 1. 6. The Saints themselves have their Wounds, yea *wounds* many times, *that stink, and are corrupt*, (as *David* speaks) *Psal.* 38. 5. Indeed, they are apt to get fresh Wounds every day, Wounds in their Grace, and Wounds in their Peace; Wounds in their Comforts, and Wounds in their Consciences; Wounds that smart sorely, and which many times bleed, as if they should bleed to death of them: Well, but Christ heals all their Wounds, and do but close with him in a Marriage-Covenant, and he will heal all thine too, who ever thou art: He is that good *Samaritan* that has Oyl and Wine, his Blood and Spirit to pour into the Wounds of his People for the healing of them: *By his stripes we are healed*, Isa. 53. 5. His Blood and Spirit are a sovereign Balm, which can heal the deepest Wounds and deadliest Diseases: His Spouses find it so, *He restoreth my Soul*

Soul, sayes *David*, Psal. 23. 3. His Soul was subject to many ails and infirmities; but Christ restored him under all: Need we say, *Is there no Balm in Gilead? is there no Physician there?* Surely there is. Indeed there is none but Christ and his Blood that can heal our Wounds. O Soul, why shouldest thou not close with him that thou mayest be healed? Do not thy Wounds stink? and are they not ready to rankle and gangreen? And unless Christ heals them for thee, must thou not unavoidably die of them and perish for ever? Must thou not suffer a cutting off, a cutting off from God, a cutting off from Christ, a cutting off from Heaven and all happiness for ever? and wilt thou suffer such a cutting off? Wilt thou be content to die and perish eternally, rather than come to Christ for healing?

IV. He bears all their Burthens: We are commanded to bear one anothers Burthens; especially Husbands should bear the burthens of their Wives: And this Christ does, he bears all the Burthens of his Spouses. Sirs, we all have our Burthens, many and great Burthens, which we labour under, Burthens within, and Burthens without; Burthens in the Flesh, and Burthens in the Spirit; Burthens that make us groan under them: *Being burthened, we groan*, sayes the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. *Burthens that are too heavy for us to bear*, as *David* complained his were, *Psal.* 38. 4. Burthens sometimes that make

make us a burthen to our selves, as *Job* complains of himself, *Job* 7. 20. Yea, Burthens that make our very lives a burthen to us: *My Soul is weary of my life*, sayes *Job*, chap. 10. 1. Now how shall all these Burthens be born? Why Christ will bear them all, he bears all the Burthens of all his Spouses; and if we will close with him in a Marriage-Covenant, there shall not that Burthen lie upon us, that he will not bear for us. He bears all his Peoples Burthens two wayes.

1. In a way of Sympathy and Compassion: He weeps with all their tears, and sighs with all their groans: If they are troubled, he grieves; if they are wounded, he bleeds: in all things he bears the other end of the burthen; *In all their afflictions he is afflicted*, Isa. 63. 9. He does συμπαθῆσαι, suffer together with us; or (as the Apostle renders it) *he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Heb. 4. 15. He is deeply sensible of all our Burthens, all our Sorrows: Such sometimes is the case with the Saints, that among men they have none to pitty them, and sympathize with them under their Burthens; as was *David*'s Case, *Psal.* 69. 20. But even then Christ bears the other end of the Burthen, he pitties them, and sympathizes with them, and that according to the weight of their Burthen. And O how sweet is that? *No matter*, sayes an Holy Man, *how heavy the burthen be, so long as Christ bears the other end of it.*

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2. In a way of Succour and Corroboration: He does not only bear with them, but also he gives them strength to bear, and stand up under the burthen: *He puts his everlasting arms underneath them*, Deut. 33. 27. And with the promise of this he encourages them to cast their Burthens upon him; *Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee*; succour, and support thee, *Psal.* 55. 22. He strengthens and succours them, and that answerable to the weight of their Burthen: He gives them great strength for great Burthens, great succours for great Temptations, and so makes good his Promise to them, *not to suffer them to be tempted above what they are enabled to bear*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. The poor Soul many times cries out, Oh, I shall sink under the Burthen, 'tis too heavy for me to bear: But, Soul, though it be too heavy for thee; yet 'tis not too heavy for Christ to bear, and he bears with thee and for thee: yea, he does not only bear, but in due time he bears away all their Burthens for them: There is not that burthen lies upon any of his Spouses, but he so bears it, as at last to bear it utterly away for them, so as they shall never need to groan under it more. He has already born the heaviest burthen of all for them, even the guilt and punishment of their sins; *He bare our sins in his body upon the Tree*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. And again, *He bare the sin of many*, Isa. 53. 12. And 'tis well for us that he hath born this Burthen; for otherwise it must necessarily have sunk

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and crusht us for ever: We could never have stood under it, and as he has born this, so he bears, and in due time will bear away all for them: Are their sins, the iniquities of their holy Things, a burthen to them? These he bears away for them, *Exod.* 28. 38. Are the remainders of original Corruption a burthen to them? These make them groan indeed; these in due time he bears away for them, *Rom.* 7. 24, 25. Are their conflicts and temptations a burthen to them? These lie heavy upon some; in due time he bears these away also: He turns their Conflicts into Triumphs: Oh how should this comfort the hearts of Saints? And how should it draw and allure sinners to him? O, Sirs, will you sink under your burthens, rather than have Christ to bear them for you? Oh be not so cruel to your own Souls!

V. He sweetens all their Afflictions for them: Afflictions they may, and often do meet withal, many and great Afflictions: Christ tells us, *That in the World we shall have tribulation*, John 16. 33. But he sweetens all for them; he turns their Wormwood into Wine, and therefore at the same time, with the same breath he sayes, *In me ye shall have peace*: As if he should say, I will sweeten all your tribulations to you. Christ sweetens his Peoples Afflictions to them two wayes.

1. By his presence with them, and the communications of his love to them under their Afflictions: Christ has promised to be with his People, and to minister comforts to

them in their afflictions, *Isa.* 43. 2. *When thou passest through the Waters, I'le be with thee; and through the Fire, it shall not burn thee*: that is, I'le be with thee in all the sharpest Afflictions thou meetest withal: They meet with many Afflictions, Sickness, Poverty, Reproach, Persecution, and the like; but Christ is with them in all, and shews them his love; and this sweetens all to them. The truth is, Christ is never more with his People, and he usually never communicates more of his Love and Consolations to them than when in Affliction: Then usually 'tis that they have the sweetest embraces of his Bosom, then they have the clearest sights, the fullest tasts, the choicest and most eminent sealings of his love to them: *Then he leads them into his Banqueting-house, and displayes the Banner of his Love over them; he stayes them with Flaggons, and comforts them with Apples: his left hand is under their head, and his right hand doth embrace them*, Cant. 2. 4, 5, 6. Then he ministers his strongest Consolations to them, *comforting them in all their tribulations*. 2 Cor. 1. 4, 5. The truth is, their sharpest Afflictions are but to prepare them for his sweetest Consolations; and indeed he therefore oftentimes afflicts them, that he may manifest his Love, and minister Consolations to them; according to that of *Hosea* 2. 14. *I will allure her into the Wilderness, and there will I speak comfortably to her*: and indeed, as strong Consolations oftentimes prepare for great Afflictions; so great Afflicti-

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ons usually make way for strong Consolations. *Afflictions* (sayes a worthy Divine) *is the Air, in which Christs love especially breaths, and Christ and the Cross* (sayes he) *are sweet company*: This, *viz.* Christs love and presence with his People in their Afflictions, is what turns their night into day, their darkness into light, their pains into ease, their sorrows into joys, their losses into gains; yea, and Death it self into Life: *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil, because thou art with me*, Psal. 23. 4. It turns a Prison into a pleasant Pallace; yea, it turns a fiery Furnace into a delightful Walk; as in the case of the three Children, and this experienced Souls find: O how sweet are Afflictions when Christ and his love come with them!

2. By sanctifying their Afflictions to them, and working good to their Souls out of all: Sanctifyed Afflictions are sweet Afflictions; they meet with Afflictions, but Christ gives them the sweet Fruit, and a blessed issue of them; makes them all work together for good to them, according to that great Oracle, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things shall work together for good to them that love God.* By these he proves their Graces, and improves their Experiences; he makes them all to be, as the *Gibeonites* sometimes were to the Congregation of God, as so many hewers of Wood and drawers of Water to their Faith, to their Comforts, to their Holiness on Earth, and Happiness in Heaven: The Faith of this

sweetned all Job's great and heavy Afflictions to him: *When I am tryed*, (sayes he) *I shall come forth as Gold*, Job 23. 10. Hereby he *tryes their Faith, which is better than Gold*, 1 Pet. 1. 7. Hereby he refines them, and purges away their dross from them, *Behold, I have refined thee, but not with Silver; I have chosen thee in the Furnace of Affliction*; Or, as you may read it, I have made a choice one of thee in the Furnace of Affliction, *Isa.* 48. 10. Hereby *he makes them partakers of his holiness*, Heb. 12. 10. *By this he purgeth away their iniquity, and taketh away their sin*, Isa. 27. 9. In short, hereby he humbles them, and seals instruction to them; hereby he weans them from the World, draws them nearer to himself, quickens their hearts in his good wayes, and raises them up to higher strains of Grace and pitches in Holiness, then they were got up to before: Yea, hereby he increases their Revenue of Glory, and adds to their Crown in Eternity. *Our light Afflictions, which are but for a moment*, (sayes the Apostle) *work out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Thus he sanctifies all; and O how doth this sweeten all? Here is a Cross, 'tis true, may the Soul say, but by this Cross Christ does crucifie me to Sin and the World, he weans me from the Creature, sets me a longing after Heaven; and so long welcome Cross, how heavy soever: Here is an Affliction, 'tis true, and 'tis an heavy one, but by it Christ proves and brightens my Graces, and that sweetens

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all: *O what one I* (sayes *Rutherford*) *to the File and Hammer of my sweet Lord Jesus? He hath taught me more* (sayes he) *by my six months imprisonment, then ever I learnt in my nine years past Ministry.* *Luther* was wont to say, *three things made a good Minister, Temptation, Affliction, Application*: The same also conduce much to the making of a good Christian: And indeed, 'tis seldom that ever a Soul comes to any eminency in Grace, until he has been exercised with sanctified Afflictions and Temptations: And doubtless, there is many a Soul who may and must say, That next to Christ, his Afflictions have, through his Grace and Blessing, been his best Mercies. O how should this draw Souls to Christ, and allure them into a Marriage-Covenant with him? Poor Soul, it may be that which keeps thee from Christ, is the fear of what Afflictions thou mayest meet with in his wayes: But know, (1.) thou mayest meet with Affliction, yea, first or last thou wilt assuredly meet with Affliction, though thou never closest with Christ: Alas, wicked men and unbelievers meet with Troubles and Afflictions, and that even in this World oft-times: However, to be sure at last, they will have a full Cup, yea, the very dregs of God's Wrath poured out unto them: They will meet with, and fall under sorer and more dreadful Afflictions, then any thou canst meet withal in the way, and for the sake of Christ, for pray consider, is there any Trouble, any Affliction thou canst meet withal for Christ

like to this, for a man to die in his sins, to be separated from God for ever, to have infiniteness and eternity combined against thee? Is there any Trouble or Affliction like to the torments of the Infernal Pit, and being the object of infinite Wrath for ever? and yet this will be the lot at last of all that close not with Christ in a Marriage-relation. (2.) What ever Afflictions thou mayest meet withal in the way of Christ, closing with him, he sweetens all for thee; and that so as that thou wouldest not have been without them for a World: Oh scare not at the Cross, but close in with Christ.

VI. He subdues all their enemies for them: True, the poor Saints and Spouses of Christ are beset with Enemies on all hands; they have many Enemies, and mighty Enemies, Enemies within, and Enemies without, and all in a confederacy against them to destroy them, to destroy their Lives, to destroy their Graces, to destroy their Peace and Comforts, to destroy their Souls and Happiness for ever, all like so many roaring Lyons seeking to devour them: Well, but Christ, who is their Captain as well as their Husband, subdues and conquers all for them; and, first or last, makes them to set their feet upon their necks, and triumph over them: He makes them *Conquerors, yea more than Conquerors* over all, *Rom.* 8. 37. He makes them so to conquer them, as sooner or later to gain by all their conflicts and oppositions; Indeed Christ has already

already conquered all his Peoples Enemies for them. The Saints have five great Enemies, *Sin*, *Self*, the *World*, the *Devil*, and *Death*; and Christ has long since conquered them all for them, and by degrees brings them into the joyful triumph of that conquest.

1. He has conquered Sin for them: He by being made Sin, hath obtained an eternal victory over Sin for all his People: Sin is the Saints great Enemy; 'tis that which *warr against their Souls*, Rom. 7. 23. 1 Pet. 2. 11. And indeed this is that which gives all the rest an advantage against them; but even this greatest Enemy Christ has conquered for them: Hence he is said *to have condemned sin in the flesh*; *he for sin, condemned sin in the flesh*, Rom. 8. 3. *i. e.* He by being made a Sacrifice for Sin, hath killed and subdued Sin, past a sentence of Death and Condemnation upon Sin for ever: Hence also *our old Man* is said to be *crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed*, Rom. 6. 6. Hence also he is said *to destroy sin, to take away sin*, and the like; And how? Why as to the Reign and Power, as well as the Guilt and Curse of it: And this *Paul*, acted by the Spirit of Faith, could triumph in, even whilst he was in the sharpest conflicts with sin, *Rom.* 7, 23, 24, 25. *I thank God through Christ*, (says he); For what? why, for victory over, and deliverance from that Law of Sin he was now conflicting with.

2. He has conquered Self for them: Self, as well as Sin, is our deadly Enemy: This

indeed is a near close Enemy, and most difficult to be slain; This is an Enemy that we are too too loth many times to have destroyed, and yet an Enemy which makes woful spoyl upon us and our happiness: I often think of the Speech of an Holy and Learned Divine; *Oh*, sayes he, *if I could be Master of that House-Idol, my Self, my own, my own Will, Wit, Credit, and ease, how blessed were I! O but we have need*, sayes he, *to be redeemed from our selves, rather than from the Devil and the World!* And presently again he cries out, *O wretched Idol, my Self! When shall I see the wholly decourted, and Christ wholly put in thy room?* And who that have any acquaintance with themselves, do not find cause to cry out in like manner? Oh this Self, this wretched Self, how great an Enemy is it! Well, but this Christ hath conquered, and closing with him, thou shalt by degrees find it to die and fall under thee. *Paul* did so, *I am crucified with Christ*, sayes he, *nevertheless I live, yet not I*, Gal. 2, 20. He had an I, a Self which ruled in him; but by Christ 'twas crucified and slain for him, and he was a conquerer over it.

3. He has conquered the World for them: Take the World in what notion you will, and 'tis in one respect or other an Enemy to the Saints; the Men of the World, the Things of the World, the Frowns of the World, the Flatteries of the World, they all one way or other fight against them, and are Enemies to them. The World, as well as Sin and Self,

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is a mortal Enemy to them: But this Enemy also Christ has subdued and conquered for them, and he has told them so much for their comfort, under the oppositions they meet with from it; *Joh.* 16. 23. *Be of good chear, I have overcome the World,* (sayes he) *q. d.* the World is your Enemy, but 'tis a conquered Enemy; 'twill molest and oppose you, but it shall not be able to hurt you, for I have conquered it for you. And as he has conquered it for us, so he will enable us, closing with him, by Faith to conquer it: so 1 John 5. 4. *This is the victory which overcometh the World, even our Faith:* The World shall not alwayes annoy and infest the Saints.

4. He has conquered the Devil, yea all the Devils in Hell for them: The Devil is the Enemy of the Saints, and indeed he is a formidable one; an Adversary that *goes about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devour,* 1 Pet. 5. 8. He is a subtil, a potent, a malicious, a cruel, and an indefatigable Enemy: But so formidable an Enemy as he is, Christ hath conquered him for them; hence he is said *to have destroyed the Devil; he partook of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil,* Heb. 2. 14. *and to have spoiled Principalities and Powers, and to have made a shew of them openly on his Cross, triumphing over them,* Col. 2. 15. dragging them at his Charriot-Wheels; as was the manner sometimes for Conquerers to deal by their vanquished

vanquished Enemies: The sum is, that he hath made a compleat and glorious conquest over all the Devils in Hell for Believers; He has conquered them even to triumph: Christ has conquered the Devil for his Spouses, as to his ruling, reigning, and commanding power, and he will, and does conquer him at last, yea speedily, as to his tempting, vexing, and seducing power; *The God of Peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly*, Rom. 16. 20. Shortly, Soul, the Devil shall vex thee no more, molest thee no more, infest and annoy thee by his temptations no more.

5. He has conquered Death for them: Death is an Enemy, and 'tis the *last Enemy that is to be destroyed*, so the Apostle tells us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 26. and in it self considered, a terrible Enemy 'tis, 'tis *the King of terrors*, Job 18. 14. But this Enemy hath Christ conquered for all his; He has taken away all its killing power, its sting and curse, in so much that they may holily triumph over it, and rejoyce in its approach; the Apostle did so, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. *Death* (sayes he) *is swallowed up in victory; O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The sting of Death is Sin, the strength of Sin is the Law, but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* O what a triumph does he here act over Death through the conquest Christ has gotten over it for him? Truly, this Enemy is so far conquered by him for them, that 'tis become indeed a friend to them, and they can, when

in a right spirit, embrace it as such, and long for it as such: Christ by Death has unstung Death, and in a sort undeatht it: Thus Christ has conquered all his Peoples Enemies, and they being made one with him in a Marriage-Covenant, all his Victories are theirs, and his Conquests theirs, and they are conquerers over all in him; and oh how sweet, how incouraging is this! and how should it win Souls to a close with him! poor Soul, thou seest thy self environed with Enemies, thou art hard beset on all hands, legions of Lusts and Devils, attended with Self, Death, and the World, oppose themselves against thee; and thou art often crying out as *David* in another case, 2 *Sam.* 3. 19. *I am weak, and these men, the Sons of* Zerviah, *are too strong for me*; yea, thou art ready to say of them, as he sometimes in his unbelief did of *Saul*, 1 Sam. 27. 1. *I shall one day perish by the hand of* Saul; Alas, I am a weak, nothing-Creature, and am unable to grapple with the least of all nine Enemies; and how then shall I stand up against them all? surely I shall perish by them at last: Well Soul, but know for thy encouragement, that all thine Enemies are conquered by Christ, and though they are too strong for thee, yet they are not too strong for Christ to grapple with, and make thee a conquerer over. When the Prophets Servant saw what a great and formidable *Host compassed the City*, he cryed out, *Alas! my Master, what shall we do?* And what did his Master answer him? *Fear not* (said he) *for they*

that

that be with us, be more than they that be with them, 2 King. 6. 15, 16. So poor Soul, when thou considereſt what great and formidable Enemies do compaſs thee about, thou cryeſt out to one and another; Alas, Sir, what ſhall I do? But I would ſay to thee as the Prophet to his Servant; Fear not, there is more with thee than with them; thou haſt Chriſt with thee, to fight and overcome all for thee; therefore chear up, give up thy ſelf unto him; and the victory over *Sin, Self, World, Death, Devil*, and all is thine for ever. Oh, who would not have ſuch an Husband?

VII. He minds and manages all their Concerns for them: 'Tis the part of an Huſband to mind and manage the Concerns of his Wife, and to have a natural care both of her and them: And thus 'tis with Chriſt, He manages all his Peoples Concerns, and that in Heaven, on Earth, and in their own Souls.

1. He minds and manages all their Concerns in Heaven for them: Their Affairs lie much in Heaven, their Buſineſs there is great; and Chriſt their Husband minds all, and tranſacts all for them, and that faithfully: Indeed he went thither on purpoſe to tranſact their Affairs for them: Hence he is ſaid *to have entered not into the holy place made with hands, but into Heaven it-ſelf, there to appear in the preſence of God for them*, Heb. 9. 24. Hence alſo he is ſaid *to be an Advocate with the Father for them*, 1 Joh. 2. 1. He pleads with the Father for them: Have they a Peti-

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tion to present to the Father for this or the other Mercy? He presents and prefers it for them: He takes all their Prayers, and sprinkles them with his own Blood, perfumes them with the odours of his own incense, and then tenders them to the Father with his own hand, *Rev.* 8. *beg.* We pray very brokenly, but he mends our Prayers; yea oftentimes, when we can't pray, when we can't speak for our selves, he speaks for us, and prefers our Petitions for us: Are there Charges and Accusations brought in against them, either by Satan the Accuser of the Brethren on the one hand, or by the Law and Justice of God, which are daily wronged and violated on the other hand? Why Christ interposes for them, he answers all, and invalidates all, *he rebukes Satan*, Zach. 3. 2. In the first verse we find *Joshua standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist* (or accuse) *him*; and in the second verse we have Christ sharply rebuking Satan for his accusation; *The Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee:* And as he rebukes Satan, so he satisfies the Law and Justice of the Father: Hence he is said *to make intercession for them*, and that to the overthrowing of all those counterpleas, which Law or Justice can put in against them, *Rom.* 8. 33, 34. Have they sinned, and do they need a new pardon, need to have things set right and even between God and them afresh? This also Christ does for them; *If any man*

sin,

sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Christ Jesus the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, 1 Joh. 2. 1, 2. While they through weakness and temptation are sinning on Earth, he out of his Grace and Love is pleading with the Father for them in Heaven: Thus he minds all their Concerns in Heaven for them.

2. He minds and manages all their Concerns on Earth for them: The Saints have their Affairs and Concerns on Earth among men, as well as in Heaven with the Father, and Christ their Husband minds and transacts all these likewise for them. Indeed he is ever mindful of them, and at work for them, *viz.* to do them good, and to promote their interest: Hence, sayes he, *the Father worketh hitherto, and I work*, Joh. 5. 17. I am alwayes at work for your good. Are they wronged and oppressed by Enemies? He avenges all their wrongs: Hence he is said *to reprove Kings for their sakes*, Psal. 105. 14. and elsewhere, to plead their cause against their Enemies, and the like. Do they need deliverance and salvation out of troubles and distresses? He *brings salvation to them*, Isa. 63. 9. Do they need conduct and guidance through their difficulties and temptations in the Wilderness of the World? He leads and guides them; *He leads* Joseph, *like a flock*, Psal. 80. 1. and elsewhere, *I will guide thee with mine eye*: He carries them through all their straits, and all their difficulties, and even when he seems most to forget them, even then he

he is ever mindful of them, and of their concerns: *For he hath graven them upon the palms of his hands, and their walls are continually before him*; and though they often say, *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me*; yet he never forsakes or forgets them, nor can he, *No, a Woman may sooner forget her sucking Child, and not have compassion upon the Son of her Womb, than he can forget his people*, Isa. 49. 14, 15, 16.

3. He minds and manages all their concerns for them in their own Souls: The Saints have many and great Concerns to be minded within them, concerns of great moment and importance; and, were they to be minded and managed onely by themselves, they would make but poor work: O! but Christ their Husband minds and manages all these likewise for them; and to be sure they can't miscarry in his hand: He gives them his Spirit to work all their works in them and for them: He observes what Grace, what Strength, what Counsel, what Comfort they stand in need of, and by his Spirit Ministers all to them: Hence he is said *to give them Grace and Mercy to help in a time of need*, seasonable supplies, *Heb.* 4. 16. and to be both *the Author and Finisher of their Faith*, Heb. 12. 2. He minds and observes, how the great Work goes on in their Souls, and he takes care for the prospering and perfecting of it: O how should this draw us to Christ, and encourage us to accept of the offers of his love?

VIII. He injoynters them in eternal Life and Glory: Husbands use to make Joynters to their Wives, they entitle them to such or such Lands and Inheritances: So Christ injoynters all his Spouses in no less than eternal Life and Blessedness: He makes over a great Joynter to them, Glory, a weight of Glory, *an exceeding and an eternal weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. *An Inheritance in Light*, Col. 1. 12. *An Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. A Kingdom, an everlasting Kingdom, *an everlasting Kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the World*, Matth. 25. 34. *A Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10. *A Crown of Righteousness*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *A Crown of Glory, which never fades*, never withers,

1 Pet.

1 Pet. 5. 4. The truth is he endows them with all his Riches, with all his Treasures, with all his Dignities, with all the Privileges of his House, with all the Purchases of his Blood, with all the Blessings of his Love, with all the Treasures of Heaven, with all the Glories of Eternity: Look, whatever is in the Promise, whatever is in the Covenant, whatever is in the glorious Counsel of Election: Look, whatever the Presence of God, the Face of God, the Bosom of God can afford: Look, whatever the heart of God could give, the Wisdom of God contrive, the Power of God produce, or the Blood of God purchase; that, all that does Christ injoynter his People in. O Sirs, how should this draw and allure us to Christ! Is Heaven and eternal Life worth nothing? Are all the Glories of Eternity of no value? O who are you, that Christ should be willing to initate you into all this? In your selves you are lying in the lap and bosom of Hell, Heirs of Wrath and Condemnation, in danger every moment of sinking into the infernal Pit: But loe! Christ comes and makes love to you, and if you will accept of him, he will entitle you unto Life and Blessedness, to such things *as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. Take him therefore, I beseech you, into your most intimate embraces. Thus you see in part, what great things Christ does for his Spouses: Now will you accept of him, or will you not? May I not say to you, as *Saul* sometimes did to his Servants? *Hear now, will the Son of* Jesse *give to every one of you Fields and Vineyards, and make you Captains of Thousands?* 1 Sam. 22. 7. So will *Sin*, or the *World*, or the *Law*, to which you are naturally wedded, do such great things for you as Christ will? Will these pay your Debts for you, supply your Wants for you, heal your Wounds for you, and the like? Will these secure your eternal Interest for you, and make you happy in the other World as Christ would? Alas! they can do none of all this: O close, close therefore with Christ, who can and will do all.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Which opens a little the heart of Chriſt, and ſhews how much he is ſet upon an Eſpouſal with Sinners.

SUrely Chriſt is the beſt Husband, and none can do ſuch great things as he for his Spouſes, which renders an Eſpouſal to him very deſirable: but will he take ſuch as we are into ſo near a Relation with him? has he any mind, any heart to the buſineſs? any mind, any heart? his heart is ſet upon nothing more, than an Eſpouſal with Sinners; he is not only content to admit Sinners coming to him, but his Soul longs after them: never did the moſt paſſionate Lover more long for an Eſpouſal between him and his Beloved, than Chriſt does for an Eſpouſal between himſelf and Sinners: and becauſe Love is the Loadſtone of Love, and the moſt powerful attractive; in order to the more effectual drawing and alluring of your Souls to Chriſt, I ſhall a little in a few particulars open my ſweet Lords heart to you in this buſineſs: And O that the reports of his Love to you, and his willingneſs to Eſpouſe you to himſelf, might draw your hearts out a little in Love to him, and work you into a willingneſs to be Eſpouſed.

1. Such is the heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet

upon an Espousal with Sinners, that he willingly became incarnate, bled, and dyed in order hereunto; and oh, how should this draw us to him? Should you see a Man do some great Act of self-denyal and abasement, and withal freely venture his Life in order to his obtaining such or such an one to his Wife, you would easily conclude, that his heart was much set upon an Espousal with her: Lo then! Christ has greatly denyed and abased himself, he became incarnate, and not only freely ventured, but laid down his Life in order to an Espousal between himself and Sinners; and how much then must his heart be in the business?

1. He became incarnate in order hereunto; had not Christ been incarnate we could never possibly have been Espoused unto him, nor have enjoyed conjugal Communion with him: but that we might be capable of, and arrive unto such an happiness, he who in himself was the Eternal Son, freely became incarnate, assumed humane Nature into Union with his Divine Person: hence 'tis said, that *the Word was made flesh*: Joh. 1. 14. not that there was a transmutation of God into Flesh; but the Word, that is, God the Son, the Second Person in Trinity, assumed Flesh, humane Nature into Union with himself; and so near

Verbum caro factum, non Divinæ Naturæ conversione, sed humanæ assumptione. Beza.

Voce ἐγένετο non conversio divinitatis, quæ est invariabilis nou commixtio naturarum divinæ & humanæ, sed unio designatur. Cartw. in loc.

near is that Union into which the humane Nature is assumed with the Person of the Son of God, as that that Nature hath no subsistence but what it has in his Divine Person, and for that end, among others (as a Learned Divine hath observed) its so expreſt; *the Word was made Flesh, namely, to note the infinite nearness of that Union which our Nature is taken into with the Divine Person, it being so near, as that it hath no subsistence of its own, but is, as it were, wholly melted into the Personality of the Son of God:* hence also he is said *to partake of Flesh and Blood, to be manifested in the Flesh*, and the like: and oh! what an Act of self-denyal and abasement was this! and how great was Christ's condescention herein? in *Phil.* 2. 6, 7. the Apostle speaks of it as the greatest abasement he could stoop unto: *who* (sayes he, speaking of Christ) *being in the form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Men*: pray, mark, he was in the form of God; that is, he was truly and really God, as the Father was; and he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God; *i. e.* he had all those Divine Excellencies and perfections in him, which the Father had in him; and yet (sayes he) he took upon him the form

usus est verbo γενέσθαι ut significet arctissimam & indissolubilem unionem verbi cum carne. ut non alia scilicet sed una & eadem jam sit persona Verbi & carnis assumptæ. Chemni: --

of a Servant, and was made in the likeneſs of Men: that is, he became incarnate, he became Man: Well, and what does this argue? Even infinite condeſcention; therefore he tells us, that herein he became of no Reputation, or, as the Greek is, he emptied himſelf, to wit, of his glory; his glory was veiled and clouded hereby; the glory of his God-head was Eclipſed; 'tis true indeed, his God-head was not hereby loſt, or laid aſide; no, he was as much, and as truly God after his Incarnation, as he was before: he did not ceaſe to be God, by becoming Man; but (as one of the Ancients expreſſes it) *he was made that which he was not; and yet remained that which he was:* he was made Man, yet ſo as that he ſtill remained to be God: but though his God-head was not loſt, or laid aſide hereby; yet hereby was the glory of it veiled and loſt for a time, and he was not content to have it ſo; oh! how great a condeſcention was this? oh! for him that was God, God equal with the Father, to become Man, to cover himſelf with the courſe Veil of our Fleſh, and be content for ſo long a time to loſe the glory of his Deity which was infinitely dear to him; and all this to make way for an Eſpouſal between

ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε. *Se evacuavit omni gloria, i. e. Chriſtus gloriam illam & majeſtatem, in qua erat apud patrem, ita ab ſe diderit in forma ſervi ut ea ſe penitus evacuaſſe viſſit.* Zanch. in Loc. *Factus quod non erat, manens quod erat.* Ber.

Carnis humilitas fuit inſtar veli, quo Divina majeſtas tegebatur Calo.

between himſelf and poor Sinners; what ſelf-abaſement was this? and how ſhould it encourage Souls to look after an Eſpouſal to him!

2. He not only became Incarnate, but alſo freely bled, and dyed in order hereunto, which is a further diſcovery of his heart herein, being (ſayes the Apoſtle) *found in faſhion as a Man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the Croſs.* i. e. to the moſt formidable Death, a Death of pain, a Death of ſhame, an accurſed Death, *Phil.* 2. 8. Hence alſo 'tis ſaid, that *he gave himſelf an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for us*, Eph. 5. 2. Yea, not only did he bleed, and ſuffer, and dye; but he did all freely, and with much readineſs, and enlargedneſs of Soul: hence he is ſaid to have *powred out his Soul unto Death*, Iſa. 53. 12. He ſeemed in an holy manner prodigal of his Life in the caſe; he thought neither Blood, nor Life, nor any thing too much for them: Oh! how much does this argue his heart to be upon the buſineſs? It ſpake *Jacob*'s heart to be much ſet upon *Rachel* to have her to Wife, that he could be content to undergo ſo much hard Service for her as he did, even ſeven years Service. *Jacob* ('tis ſaid) *ſerved ſeven years for* Rachel, *yea, and they ſeemed unto him but a few days, for the Love he had to her*, Gen. 29. 20. So ſurely it argues Chriſts heart to be much ſet upon an Eſpouſal with Sinners, that he was content,

Voluntariè ſeipſum in mortem tradidit. Muſc. in Loc.

tent, not only to ſerve, but even bleed, and dye for them in order hereunto. Oh, Sirs, behold, and wonder; Chriſt comes from Heaven, quits his Throne, leaves the boſome of his Father, in which he had with infinite delight lain from Eternity! behold and wonder, the Lord of Life dyes, the God of Bleſſing was made a Curſe. The infinitely beloved Son treads the Wine-preſs of the Father's wrath, Heaven deſcends into Hell, glory veils and Eclipſes it ſelf under ſhame and ignominy, the infinitely holy one is made ſin; and all this to redeem, and redeeming, Eſpouſe poor Sinners to himſelf! and is not his heart upon the buſineſs think you? And has he not Love for them? Oh, be not faithleſs, but believing.

2. Such is the heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet upon an Eſpouſal with Sinners, that he condeſcends ſweetly to woo them, and ſolicit them for their Love and acceptance of him: Should you ſee a Man with all earneſtneſs and importunity wooing a Virgin, and making Love to her, following her from day to day with renewed offers and ſollicitations, you would conclude his heart was much ſet upon an Eſpouſal with her: And is it not thus with the Lord Jeſus towards poor Sinners? Does he not woo them, and make Love to them, and that with all earneſtneſs and preſſing importunity, following them with renewed offers and ſollicitations from day to day?

Now

Now he meets them in this Ordinance, and there he woos them, and makes Love to them; anon he meets them in that Ordinance, and there woos them, and makes Love to them: now he sends his Ministers, and by them woos them, and makes Love to them; anon he sends his Spirit: and by him woos them, and makes Love to them: thus he is every way, and upon all occasions wooing them, and in his wooing of them.

How earnestly does he call, and invite them to himself; 'tis not a cold offer or a slight motion onely, that he makes to them, but he moves, and offers, calls, and invites with all earnestness and importunity: *Hoe, every one, that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, come ye, yea, come,* Isa. 55: 1. and again, *the Spirit and the Bride say, come; and let him, that is a thirst, come,* Rev. 22. 17.

How vigorously does he plead and expostulate the business with them? Christ does not onely call, and invite; but he also pleades, and expostulates with sinners in the case; and that in the most winning way, and with the most weighty arguments, that possibly may be: *Hoe, every one that thirsteth, come unto the waters, wherefore do you spend your Money for that which is not bread, And your labour for that which satisfieth not? incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live, and I will make with you an everlasting Covenant, even*

the sure mercies of David, Isa. 55. 2, 3. And again, *turn ye, turn ye, why will ye dye, O house of Israel*; Ezek. 33. 11. I have no pleasure in your damnation; but had rather, that you would come unto me, and live: why will you dye? is not life better then death? is not Heaven better then Hell? is not my love better then a Lust? are not the *Pleasures of my Presence, and at my right hand, which are for evermore, better then the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season*, a short season? *why will you dye? is there no balm in Gilead, is there no Physitian there?* am not I able to save you to the uttermost? and are not my Arms wide open to receive you? have not I dyed for that very end, that you might live? look, here's my Blood, here are my Wounds; behold me in the Garden, and see me bleeding there for you: behold me upon the Cross, and see me bleeding, yea, bleeding to death there for you; and then see, if you can find in your hearts to refuse me any longer? In short, would you not lose all your cost and all your labour? would you enjoy good, the best good, the most satisfying good? have you any mind to life, and would you have your souls live for ever? have you any mind to my Covenant, and all the riches and treasures of that? then accept of me and my love, in whom you shall have all.

How sweetly do he melt, and how tenderly do his Bowels yearn towards them, and over them? he comes to them

not

not onely with invitations in his Lips, but also with tears in his eyes, and tender compassions in his heart, strongly working towards them: now he weeps, and then he groans; now he drops a sigh, and then a tear; and all to melt their hard and unbelieving hearts, to draw, and allure them to himself. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem* (says he) *how often would I have gathered thee?* Math. 23. 37. *the repetition of the name shews the depth of his love and commiseration towards them*: And indeed, methinks I see how the tender heart of my dear Lord melts, and even bleeds over this unbelieving City, and in them all unbelieving sinners to whom he offers himself: he is melted into tears towards them; so you have it, *Luke* 19. 41, 42. in *Mat.* he groans only, but in *Luke* he both Weeps and Groans: see then! here is sweet Jesus weeping and groaning: here's the joy of the whole Earth weeping and groaning; and that over *Jerusalem*, a bloody City, a City embroiled in the blood of his Saints, and a City thirsty of his own blood, a City full of wickedness, full of the contempt of his Gospel, his Grace, his Salvation.

Repetitio nominis vultus indicat amoris & commiserationis. Pare 9 in Loc.

How freely and openly does he reveal and offer himself to them? The offer Christ makes is not a Limited offer; but general and extensive to all; nor is it an offer made upon hard and severe terms; but upon terms of Grace & Love: *Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the Earth*, Isa. 45. 22. *Hee every*

one

one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come buy Wine, and Milk without money, and without price, Isa. 55. 1. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*; Mat. 11. 28. *Whoever is a thirst, let him come unto me, and drink*, Joh. 7. 37. *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock, if any Man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in*, Rev. 3. 20. And again, *Whoever will, let him come, and take of the Water of Life freely*, Rev. 22. 17. Mark, all, every one, whoever will, though never so vile, and sinful, never so black, and deform'd, though he has been never so desperate an Enemy to me and my glory: Surely, were not his heart much in the business, he would not thus freely, and unlimitedly offer himself.

How affectionately does he beseech, and intreat them? The tender trembling Child cannot more affectionately intreat and beseech his offended Father to spare him, and be reconciled unto him; then Christ does intreat and beseech offending Sinners to be Espoused to him, and be made happy by him for ever: *Now then, we are Embassadors for Christ* (says the Apostle) *as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*: 2 Cor. 5. 20. Pray mark, here is praying, and beseeching; the Lord of Glory, as it were, upon his knees to poor Sinners, begging them to accept of him, and his Love: *We*

pray

pray you in Christ's stead: *i. e.* 'tis not we, but Christ by us, that prays, and beseeches you: O, what condescension is this! once more.

How sweetly does he draw and allure them? *draw me* (sayes the Spouse) *and we will run after thee*, Cant. 1. 4. And indeed he does draw and allure Souls, and that with admirable sweetness: *I drew them with Cords of Love, with the bands of a man* (sayes he) *Hos.* 11. 4. Now he sets his Beauty, Riches, and Glory before them, thereby to draw and allure them, anon he drops a little Myrrhe upon the handle of the Lock; he gives them some little taste and feeling of his Grace and Love, thereby to draw and allure them: Now he sweetly insinuates his Love to them; he tells them, how much his heart is upon them, what great things he has done and suffered for them, and how that he has no design upon them, but to make them happy for ever: anon he lets them see how infinitely happy a Marriage-Union and Communion with him would make them; he lets in some small glimpses of Heaven and Glory upon them; he opens the Treasures of his Covenant and Kingdome to them: And all this to draw and allure them to himself; and over, and above all this, he ever and anon comes, and as it were, takes the Soul aside, and by the still voyce of his Spirit, makes love to him: Come, poor Soul (sayes he) look upon thy bleeding, dying

Saviour;

Saviour; come, see, what I have done, and see what I have prepared for thee, see what Treasures of Life, and Love, of Grace, and Glory there are in me: look, here is my Love, taste and see, if it be not *better than Wine*: here is my Bosome, make thy Bed in it, and see if it be not a warm Bosome: Come, Soul, though thou hast no Love for me, yet I have Love for thee, and would fain have thee happy for ever: why therefore should'st thou stand at such a distance from me? Thus he sweetly woos and sollicits them for their Love and acceptance of him: Now, Soul, does he thus woo thee? And wilt thou refuse him? If so, know, that the time of Love will not alwayes last: yea, and the time will come, when, though *thou calleſt, and cryeſt, yet he will not hear*: let me therefore say to thee, as *Paul* to his *Corinthians*: *Receive not the Grace of God in vain; for behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation.*

3. Such is the heart of Christ, and so set upon an Espousal with Sinners, that he not only thus woos them, but also waits long upon them, often renews the offers of his Love to them, and puts up many horrid affronts and provocations at their hands; if at last he may prevail with them. Suppose a Man should not only make Love to a Person, but he should also wait long upon her in the tenders of his Love, and that though he met with many

affronts

affronts and unkindneſſes from her; this you would ſay, would argue his heart to be much ſet upon her: and is it not thus with Chriſt towards poor Sinners? O, how long does he wait upon them? how often does he renew the offers of his Love to them? And what affronts, indignities, and unkindneſſes does he bear with at their hands? *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock* (ſayes he) *Rev.* 3. 20. ſtanding is a waiting poſture: Chriſt does not give a call or a knock at the door of the Sinners heart, and away; no, he ſtands knocking: he gives call after call, and knock after knock, being ever ready to enter, if the Soul will at all open to him: ſo again, *all the day long have I ſtretched out my hands to a diſobedient and gain-ſaying People; a people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face*, Iſa. 65. 2, 3. Rom. 10. 21. *all the day long*: Chriſt waits day after day, and week after week, and moneth after moneth, and year after year upon Sinners: yea, and many affronts and indignities does he put up, and paſs by from them; *all the day long have I ſtretched forth my hands*, opened the Arms and Boſome of my Love, and that *to a gain-ſaying and rebellious People*, an oppoſing, refuſing, reſiſting People, a *people that provoketh me to my face continually* every day; a People that are daily loading me with their ſins and provocations, a People that will not let me go one day without affronting me, and that to my face;

Fidem & reſpiſcentiam eos in vitavi. Scult. in Loc.

face; a People that are every day daring me to damn them: O, what patience is this? So, *Mat.* 23: 37. *O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldest not?* How often? not once, or twice, or ten times; but very often: it notes, that he waited long upon them, and strove long with them, and that after many and often repeated affronts and refusals on their part; he still tender'd himself and his love to them, and thus he deals by Sinners still, he tenders himself and his Love to them, but they will have none of him; he renews his offers, and they renew their refusals: they spurn at his Love, yet he makes love still: he tells them, what great preparations he has made, and how all things are ready, and how welcome they shall be to the Marriage-Feast; but *they make light of all*, preferring a Worldly interest before him and it, *Mat.* 22. *beginning*. Well, however he leaves them not, but sends again, and calls again, notwithstanding all. They do in effect tell him, they desire neither him nor his Grace, that they had rather enjoy their Lusts, then his Love: they abuse his Grace, they despise his corrections, they slight his calls, they resist his Spirit: O, what affronts are these! And after all this, it may be, he renews his suit, laying himself and his Love at their feet, if yet he may win them to him: Oh, how much must his heart be upon an Espousal

with

with them? Soul, let it melt thee into Love to him: Oh, who would withſtand ſuch a Lord, ſuch a Lover, What, woo, and wait ſo long too, put up ſuch, and ſo many affronts, and ſtill make Love! Was ever Love like this, and patience like this?

4. Such is the heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet upon an Eſpouſal with ſinners; as that he has laid himſelf under Bonds to receive them, and accept of them, in caſe they are willing to be Eſpouſed to him; and what greater Diſcovery of his heart then this? Should a young man lay himſelf under Bonds to Marry ſuch or ſuch a Woman, though as yet ſhe hated him, and were utterly averſe from him; you would ſurely conclude, that his heart was much ſet upon a Match with her: and truly this is no more then Chriſt the Lord of Glory hath done: he is become bound to Marry poor Sinners to himſelf, yea though at preſent they hate him, and are altogether averſe from him; yet in caſe they ſhall at laſt be willing to cloſe with him, he is become bound to receive them: he is become bound both to the Father, & to them.

1. He is bound to the Father to receive Sinners & Eſpouſe them to himſelf, in caſe they come to him, ſo much is held forth in Jo. 6. 27: *Labour not for the Meat that periſheth, but for that which endures unto Everlaſting life, which the Son of man ſhall,* [mark] *ſhall give unto you: for him hath God the Father Sealed.* That is, God the Father hath ordained and appointed Chriſt, he has laid a

Law

Law upon him to give Eternal Life; and therefore himself, to Sinners, coming to him; and we may therefore rest assured that he will do it: yea, Christ looks upon himself as under a law from the Father to do it, and therefore Sayes, *thy Law is within my heart*; Psal. 40. 8. thy Law: what Law? why, the Law of his Mediatorship, which commands him as to dy for Sinners, so to accept of Sinners when they come unto him, and surely he that so freely fulfilled it in the one, will not be disobedient to it in the other: in a word, in that Covenant (by Divines called the Covenant of Redemption) which past between the Father and Jesus Christ from Eternity concerning the Salvation of Sinners, Christ became bound to the Father to receive all that should come to him, and he will be faithful.

2. He is bound to Sinners themselves in the case: he has indeed given them his Bond, he has given them his promise, which is his Bond, and a strong one too, an invincible obligation, and the soul may look on it as such: but where is his promise? truly the whole Gospel is but as it were one general promise made by him to this purpose; but take one for all the rest, Jo. 6. 36. *All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out*; i. e. I will most assuredly receive him, and bestow my self and eternal life upon him; and how often has he

renewed

renewed this Bond of his? yea, and that it might be Firm and valid to our Faith as well as in it ſelf, he hath hereunto added his Seal, and that ſuch a Seal as renders it altogether unqueſtionable: for 'tis the Seal of his own Blood: Hence the Goſpel is called *the new Teſtament in his Blood*, that is, Seal'd and *ratified in his Blood*, Luke. 22.20. And his Blood is called *the Blood of the Covenant*; becauſe the Covenant and promiſes thereof are Seal'd with that Blood, *Heb.* 9. *Latter end.* Yea, more yet, if his promiſe and his Seal be not enough, they ſhall have more, for to both theſe he has added his Oath for their further ſecurity in the caſe; *Verily, verily* (ſayes he) *he that believeth on me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation*, and again, *verily, verily, the hour cometh, and now is, when the Dead ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live*) Joh 5. 24, 25. *As I live, was the form of God's Oath in the old Teſtament*, & he there Swears *he hath no pleaſure in the death of Sinners, but had rather they would turn and live*, Ezek. 33. 11. *and verily, verily* is the form of Chriſts Oath in the new Teſtament, and he there (you ſee) Swears that Souls ſhall live coming to him. *O happy we* (as one of the Antients Cryes out) *for whoſe ſakes God doth Swear, but O unbelieving we, if we*

O felices nos! quorum cauſa deus jurat! O infideles nos, Si juranti non credamus. Tertul. *Lib. de panit.*

do not believe him swearing. Thus Christ hath given us his Bond, his promise, and that seal'd with his Blood, and to all added his Oath for the further incouragement of our Faith; and what can we desire more? If you have a mans promise to you for the performance of this or that, you think you are well: you judging him to be both able and Faithful: but if you have his Seal added to his promise, then you look upon your selves secure of the business indeed: but if to both these you have his Oath added, then you look on the business past all doubt, and you dare not question it: why lo! Christ has given poor Sinners all this to assure them that he will imbrace and accept them coming to him; and Oh how firm may their Faith stand upon all this? and what horred wickedness must it be so much as once to question it? true neither his seal nor his Oath addes any thing to the truth and certainty of the promise in it self; but to our sense and apprehension it does; and meerly out of indulgence to us & our weakness is the one and the other added, so the Apostle tells us, Heb. 6.17,18. *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his Councell confirmed it by an Oath, that by two*

In deo tam dicere, quam jurare, immutabile est. sed en quam indulgenter ut optimum patrem decet, se deus accommodet nostræ tarditati, quia nos videt simplici suo sermoni non acquiescere, ut cum plenius sanciat in cordibus nostris. addit jusjurandum. Cal. in Locum.

two immutable things wherein it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong conſolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before us. Mark, 'twas not to confirm, or add any thing to the truth and certainty of God's counceil or Covenant, that his Oath was added; but 'twas to confirm, and incourage our Faith: Thus you ſee Chriſt is under Bonds to receive and accept of ſinners, if they come to him, and are willing of an Eſpouſal with him: and how much does this argue his heart to be in the buſineſs? O let none ever ſay, will Chriſt accept and receive me coming to him? for indeed Bonds bind him ſo to do: The truth is, were he under no bonds, we need not queſtion it; for his bowels would conſtrain him, and had he no Bowels, we need not to doubt it; for Bonds would bind him to it. Chriſt muſt deny his Word, Promiſe, Seal, Oath and all; if he refuſe any ſoul that indeed comes to him, and deſires to cloſe in a Marriage-Covenant with him: Oh what encouragement is this?

5. Such is the heart of Chriſt, and ſo ſet upon an Eſpouſal with ſinners; as that he has given them a full and unqueſtionable aſſurance that nothing what ever ſhall ſtand between him and them, nor prejudice their acceptance with him, in caſe they be willing to be Eſpouſed unto him: ſhould a man not onely make love to a perſon, wait long upon her in the

tenders thereof, and the like, but also give a full assurance that nothing shall stand between him and her to hinder the Match; in case she be willing to accept of him, this would argue his heart to be much upon her indeed: Now this also Christ hath done. He hath given sinners a full and firm assurance that nothing shall prejudice their acceptance with him, nor hinder the Match between him & their souls in case they be willing of it: and is not his heart then much upon the business? this is no other then what he himself declares, *Joh.* 6. 37. And certainly he doth not delude souls with vain words. *Him that cometh unto me*, (*Saves* he) i. e. He that believeth on me he that is willing to be mine, *him I will in no wise cast out*: in no wise, or by no means, upon no accounts whatever: Nothing shall obstruct his acceptance with me; but I will receive him with a notwithstanding; notwithstanding all his Vileness, all his unworthiness, all his unkindness, all his unsuitableness: Notwithstanding all that, either Men, or Devils, Law, or Conscience can charge upon him, yea, or that unbelief its self can pretend or alledge; be it what it will, notwithstanding all I'le receive him into the Bosome of my love. Christ language to poor sinners in this promise of his, and many more of like import is such as this: come, poor souls, be not afraid of me, what ever your condition be,

be, and how ever things stand, and are stated with you, yet if you have a mind to me, and an Espousal with me, assure your selves, that nothing shall obstruct your acceptance with me, nothing shall shut up my Bosome against you; but *I will betroth you to my self for ever*. Oh, what encouragement is here? Come to Christ, and close with Christ in a Marriage-Covenant, who would not do that, may some say? but alas there are a thousand things that will hinder the March, and stand between him and me, should I go to him: poor soul, this is apparently the plea and Language of unbelief, and let it be silenced for ever, Christ having (as thou seest) fully assured us of the contrary: But besides, what is it that thou feareſt, (or that any soul can fear) will stand between Christ and thee, to hinder an Espousal with him? Bring forth thy strong pleas, and see if they will bear any weight in the Sanctuary-ballance.

1. Is it outward meanness and baseness? possibly thou art low and mean, and base in the World; thou art a poor, forlorn, despicable Creature; and this thou thinkest will stand between Christ and thee; surely (sayest thou) Christ will never take such a Contemptible Worm, as I am, into such a Relation with himself; But sinner, this shall not hinder in the least; for Christ is no respecter of Persons; *High, and Low, Rich, and Poor, Bond and free, are all one in Christ*, and to Christ, *Gal.* 3. 28. Yea,

does not the word tell us, that *he chooses the poor of this World, Heires of the Kingdom, and rich in Faith?* Jam. 2. 5. And again, ye see your calling, Brethren (Says the *Apostle*) *how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many Noble are called; but God chooses Foolish, and weak, and base ones*, 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27, 28. As greatness is no furtherance, so meanness and baseness is no hinderance in this case; Men indeed mind Honour and greatness, they will have such as are suitable to themselves: But 'tis otherwise with Christ: Poor sinner, though thou beest never so low, and mean, and base in the World; though thou shouldst be cloathed with Rags; yet if thou hast a mind to Christ, he will accept thee, and Marry thee to himself; yea, and thy soul will be as dear to him, and as precious in his sight, as the soul of the greatest Prince or Monarch in the World.

2. Is it inward Blackness and deformity? perhaps, sinner, if thou art not outwardly mean and base; yet thou seest thy self inwardly Black and deformed; thou lyest in thy Blood and gore, wallowing in thy sin and Filth; neither is there any worth, any Beauty in thee for which Christ should desire thee; and therefore sayest thou, surely Christ will have nothing to do with me, nor so much as cast an eye or look of love upon me; but, soul, this shall not stand between Christ and thee

thee neither; but if thou haſt a mind to him he will Marry thee to himſelf notwithſtanding: For indeed Chriſt Marries not any for their Beauty; but thoſe whom he Marries, he Marries to make them Beautiful: He Marries them not for any worth of theirs; but to put a worth upon them, & indeed there are none that he Eſpouſes to himſelf, but he finds them Black and deformed, in their Blood and Gore, as well as thee; and ſo they are, till he puts his Beauty upon them; how ſweet is that word *Ezek.* 16. 6, 7, 8. *When I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee polluted in thy Blood,* i. e. in thy ſin and filth. *I ſaid unto thee, live, I ſaid unto thee, when thou waſt in thy Blood, live, yea, when thou waſt in thy Blood, live,* Mark, three times he mentions it, *in thy Blood, in thy Blood, in thy Blood.* To note the depth of that defilement we are all under; well, and what then? will Chriſt have any thing to do with ſuch? yes, he makes love to them: *Behold thy time was the time of love,* he Marries them to himſelf in an Everlaſting Covenant, *I ſpread my Skirt over thee* (ſayes he) *and covered thy nakedneſs,* yea, I ſwear unto *thee, and entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine*: Yea, not only ſo, but he puts a Beauty, yea, his own Beauty and comlineſs upon them, *thou art come to Excellent Ornaments, and art comly through my comlineſs which I have put upon thee, as Verſe* 14. O ſoul, be not diſcouraged, Chriſt will turn thy black-

ness into Beauty, and not cast thee off because of it.

3. Is it the greatness and Hainousness of thy sin and guilt? O my sins, my sins (sayes the poor soul) they are exceeding many, and exceeding great, they are many and great in themselves and they are cloathed with many and great aggravations: Few in the World ever sinned at that rate that I have done; therefore I fear, that Christ will never own me so as to take me into such a Relation with himself: Well, be it so, yet know; that this shall not stand between Christ, and thee, if thou art willing to be Espoused to him: He has promised to pardon great sins, and to accept notwithstanding great sins, in case the soul be but willing: *Come now* (says he) *And let us Reason together, though your sins are as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow; though they are red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool*, Isa. 1. 18. *Though your Sins are as Scarlet, and as Crimson*, i. e. Though they are great, foul, enormous Sins; Sins of a hainous and crying nature, and cloathed with the greatest aggravations, yet they shall be *White as Snow and Wool*: i. e. They shall be fully done away and pardon'd; so fully done away and pardon'd, as if they had never been: So again, *Isa.* 43. 24, 25. *in the* 24 *v.* He speaks to some, who had made him

Peccata vestra sicut nix albescent, &c. *Hoc est, vos a peccatis vestris inormibus, mundati, instar nivis, & puri eritis*, Glass. Gram. Sac.

him *to serve with his Sins, and wearied him with their iniquities*: These surely were great Sinners, and their sins of a hainous crying nature, and yet at the 25 v. what a full promise of pardon does he make to them? *I even I, am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy Sins.* Poor Soul, what shall I say? Hast thou abundantly sinned? Hast thou multiplied sins? He has promised *abundantly to pardon, and to multiply pardons*, Isa. 55. 7. Art thou guilty of all manner of sins, and to thy other sins hast thou added Blasphemy? He has promised, *that all manner of sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven, except that against the holy Ghost*, (which thy complaining of the greatness of thy sins argues thou art not guilty of) *Mat.* 12. 31. O Soul, be not discouraged because of the greatness of thy sins: Christ marries souls, not because they are not sinners, great sinners; but he Marries them to take away their sins, and to discharge them from them for ever: And the greater thy sins are, the greater will be the Glory of Christ's grace (which is what he Aims at) in receiving of thee into so near and Glorious a Relation with himself, as this is: Besides, what wilt thou do with thy great sins, unless thou goest with them to Christ? Great sins argue a great need of Christ, and call for great hastening unto Christ.

4. Is it any former neglects or refusals of thine? Possibly not onely are thy sins many

do

many and great, but there is this added to all the rest, long and frequent refusals of Christ and his love: He has often called, but thou hast given him no answer, he has long woo'd thee, but thou hast not complied with him: O the many sweet calls, Gracious offers, loving tenders, which he has made to thee, and thou hast Despised? And this makes thee fear, that he will now have nothing to do with thee: And truly soul, this is sad, very sad, hereby Christ has lost much Glory, which thou mightest have brought him; hereby thou hast lost much sweet communion, which thou mightest have enjoyed; hereby Christ's heart has been much grieved, which might have been prevented; and hereby the work is made much more difficult, then at first it was, thy heart being grown more hard, and Corruptions more strong: Thus 'tis every way very sad, that thou hast thus neglected and refused Christ, but yet neither shall this stand between him and thee in case thou art willing to be Espoused to him: For this see, *Prov.* 1. 20, 21, 22, 23. *Wisdom Cryeth without, she uttereth her voice in the Streets, she cryeth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates, in the City she uttereth her words, saying: How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity? And the Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* Pray ob-

obſerve, Chriſt had offered himſelf, and his love to them, but they had refuſed him and it, yea, they had refuſed long, and refuſed with much contempt: *How long ye Simple ones will ye love ſimplicity?* &c. They ſcorn'd the offers of Chriſt and his Love, and yet here he renewes thoſe offers to them, wherein he tells them, that none of all their refuſals ſhould prejudice their acceptance with him, in caſe they are willing to be his: *Turn ye at my reproof, behold I will pour out my* Spirit, &c. And ſoul, do not the moſt refuſe long; and ſtand it out long againſt the offers of Chriſt and his grace, e're they cloſe with him, who yet are received & embraced by him? Be not therefore diſcouraged, poor ſoul, becauſe of thy former neglects and refuſals of Chriſt, but throw thy ſelf into the Arms of his love, which thou wilt certainly find wide open to receive, and Embrace thee.

5. Is it any revolting or Back-ſliding of thine from him: Poſſibly thou haſt ſometimes been on thy way towards Chriſt, thou haſt had ſome workings, ſome good Reſolutions and affections within thee for him, & thou haſt made ſome profeſſion of him, thou haſt ſometimes been even upon the turning point, the point of cloſeing with Chriſt, and the Match has been near made up between him and thee: And yet after all this, thou haſt revolted and Back-ſliden from him, *Playing the Harlot*

with

with many lovers, which makes thee fear, that he will now reject thee, shouldest thou goe to him: And the truth is, this also is very sad: For hereby Christ has been eminently Dishonoured, and thy Soul has been eminently endangered: But yet be not discouraged; for this shall not stand between Christ and thee, if yet thou art but willing to be Espoused to him: Christ offers himself and his grace to such, as these; he promises to heal Back-slidings, *Jer.* 3. 1. *Though thou hast played the Harlot with many lovers; yet return unto me*, saith the Lord, and v. 12. *Return thou Backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: For I am merciful*, so *Hos.* 2. 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me.* Thee, who? Why as revolting and Backsliding a People, as ever were in the World; so you will find in the beginning of the Chap. There is hope then (you see) for revolters and Backsliders; therefore be not discouraged, but go to him, and he will not cast thee out: Well soul, Here's encouragement enough for thee notwithstanding all thy Vileness, Sinfulness, and unworthiness; and to add to thy encouragment, yet, know, Christ has received multitudes that were every way as vile, sinful, and unworthy as thou art: What dost thou think of *Manasseth*, who was a Sorcerer, and an Idolater? What dost thou think of *Paul*, who was a Persecuter and a Blasphemer? What dost thou

thou think of *Mary Magdalen*, who had seven Devils in her? What dost thou think of *Rahab*, who was an Harlot? What dost thou think of multitudes of those, who Crucified Christ, but afterwards believed? These were all great Sinners, and yet Christ received them into the Arms of his Love: What dost thou think of the black List and Catalogue of Sinners among the *Corinthians*, mentioned, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. & 10. who were *Drunkards, Thieves, Murderers, Adulterers, Idolaters, abusers of themselves with Mankind*, and the like? What dost thou think of them? *Titus* 3. 3. who were *Foolish, Disobedient, Living in Envy, Hateful, and hateing one another, serving divers Lusts and pleasures*? Surely these were as vile, as sinful, as worthless as thou art, and had as much to stand between Christ and them; and yet they found grace in Christ's sight upon their looking to him. Indeed there is never a Soul now in Heaven, but was by Nature every way as vile, sinful, and unworthy of Christ, as thou: they lay under the same pollution, they wallowed in the same Blood, they were filled with the same Spirit of opposition against God and his wayes, that thou dost, and art; yea, and multitudes of them were as vile and sinful by practice also, as thou; they Acted out the sin and enmity of their Natures as highly against God and Christ, as thou hast done; and yet these Christ received,

else

else they had not been in Heaven. In a word, Heaven (as one observes) is an House full of the Miracles of Christ's free Grace: There's Idolatrous *Manasseh* among the true Worshippers of God: There's oppressing *Zacheus* among the Spirits of Just Men made perfect: There's Blasphemous *Paul* among the Host of Angels, Lauding, Praising, and singing *Halelujahs* to God and the Lamb; and there is *Mary Magdalen*, that had seven Devils among the Saints of the most High, who are filled even to overflowing with the seven Spirits of God. O, who then would be discouraged? Yea, Soul, all thy vileness, sinfulness, and unworthiness does, but as it were, qualifie thee for Christ and his free Grace: My sinful wants and unworthiness (sayes *Rutherford*) have qualified me for Christ and his grace: Cast thy self therefore fully upon him notwithstanding all, not doubting thine acceptance with him.

6. Such is the heart of Christ, and so set upon an Espousal with sinners, as that, he delights and rejoyces in nothing more hardly, then in the Nuptials between him and them; and oh, how should this draw and allure us to him? Should you see a Young Man rejoycing in the sense of an Espousal between himself, and such, or such an one whom he Loved, you might well conclude, that his heart was much upon her: and is it not thus here? Christ re-

rejoyces in the ſight and ſenſe of an Eſpouſal between himſelf and ſinners, and how much does this Argue his heart to be in the buſineſs? This I will give you in three propoſitions.

1. This is what he rejoyced and delighted himſelf in the thoughts of from all Eternity: thus much he himſelf tells us, *Prov.* 8. 30, 31. Then, namely, from Everlaſting, *was I by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoycing alwayes before him, rejoycing in the habitable parts of the Earth, and my delights were with the Sons of Men:* Theſe are Chriſt's words, and in them he tells you where he was, and what he had been doing from Eternity, he was with the Father, and rejoyced before him; but what did he rejoyce in? truly, next to his Father and himſelf, his rejoycing was in the habitable parts of the Earth, and his delights were with the Sons of Men: He delighted himſelf in the thoughts of ſaving poor ſinners, and Eſpouſing them unto himſelf in order thereunto: Oh, how much does this Argue his heart to be in the buſineſs?

2. As he thus delighted and rejoyced in the thoughts of it before hand; ſo when at any time a poor Soul is Actually Eſpouſed to him, then he rejoyces afreſh, and is delighted afreſh: Hence the day of Eſpouſals is called *the day of the gladneſs of his heart*, Cant. 3. 11. the day

day of Espousals between Christ and a poor Sinner, is a day of gladness and rejoycing to the Father, a day of gladness and rejoycing to the blessed Spirit, a day of gladness and rejoycing to the Holy Angels, and Spirits of just men made perfect: *For there is joy in Heaven*, at this, *Lu.* 15. 7. But 'tis especially a day of gladness and rejoycing to Christ the Bridegroom: O to see poor Sinners come in and give up themselves to him in a Marriage-Covenant; this is the joy, the rest, the satisfaction of his soul: Hence 'its said, *he shall see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied*, Isa. 53. 11. 'Tis a great grief and trouble to Christ, that which wounds his very soul, when having wooed poor Sinners, and time after time made Love to them, they notwithstanding are Shy of him, and will not close with them in a Marriage-Covenant: Hence he complains, as he does *Jo.* 5. 41. *You will not come to me that you might have life, and Mat.* 23. 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldst not*: He speaks complainingly, & as one grieved at heart, at their neglects of him, yea this was that which made him Weep as he did over Jerusalem *Luke.* 19. 41, 42. Behold the joy of the whole Earth weeping! And why? Because of their refusals of him, and his Grace, and the woful Destructions that for these refusals were coming upon them: Indeed this is what reflects great

Dishonour

Dishonour upon his name, poures great contempt upon his Grace, and is directly contrary to the whole design of his undertakings, as mediator, and so cannot but be grievous to him: So on the contrary, when souls come freely in, and give up themselves in a Marriage-Relation to him, this glads and rejoyces his heart; Oh how should this draw souls to him? Sinner, why may not this day be made the day of the gladness of Christ's heart, by being a day of Espousals between him and thee? He has seen many a day of grief of heart, and trouble of heart, because of thy standing out against him, and refusing the offers of his Love: Oh now let him see one day of joy of heart and gladness of heart by thy closing up with him in a Marriage-Covenant!

3. As Christ delights and rejoyces when souls are Espoused to him; so being Espoused to him, he delights and rejoyces in this Espousal for ever: Men Marry such or such, and they rejoyce therein at present, but their joy does not last: It is otherwise with Christ, he did rejoyce in the thoughts of it from all Eternity, he does rejoyce in the being and accomplishment of it here in time, and he will rejoyce in the consummation of it in Heaven for ever; the truth is, his joy is not compleat, till the Marriage be compleat; nor will his joy ever end, till that end, which will never be (as in its place may be shewn)

Thus you see a little what Christ's heart is, and how much set upon this Business; as well as what manner of Husband he is, and what great things he does for all his Espouses; and now after all what do you say? Art thou for Christ or no? Shall the nuptiall go on between him and your souls, or shall it not? Soul, what answer must I give my Lord and Master that sent me to thee? 'Tis but a little while and he will call both thee and me to an account concerning these things, and I must say, Lord, I woo'd that soul for thee; I besought him to be Espoused unto thee; and so far as I was able I displayed thy Beauty, thy Riches, thy Glory before him; I opened thine heart to him, shewed him thy Love and thy willingness to be Espoused to him, hoping that the cords of thy Love would draw him, and with my whole strength entreated him to give up himself in a Marriage Coverant to thee: Well, and what was the Issue? Lord thou knowest: But, soul, what answer must I return. Must I be put to say? Lord, I laboured in vain, and spent my strength in vain, for he made light of all, and would have none either of thee or thy Love: O put me not to make this Dismal answer; rather let me have cause to say; *Behold, I and the Children which God hath given me*, Behold, this soul, and that soul, and many souls were won over to thee. Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Which Directs Souls, and ſhews them the way, how to Attain unto this ſweet and Bleſſed Eſpouſal with Jeſus Chriſt.

AN Eſpouſal with Chriſt, what more ſweet? what more deſirable? And who that underſtands himſelf, would not covet it, before any thing this World affords? no Husband like Chriſt, and no happineſs like to an Eſpouſal to him, but the queſtion is, how we may attain hereunto: Truly, ſoul, the work is great, and 'tis the Divine Spirit alone that does and can tie the Marriage-Knot between Chriſt and thee; but he works in this, as well as in other caſes, in and by the uſe of means; and there are ſeveral things highly incumbent upon thee, and which muſt be attended by thee, as ever thou wouldſt attain to an acquaintance with this Bleſſed Eſpouſal.

1. Would'ſt thou be Eſpouſed to Chriſt? Then labour to be deeply Senſible of thine utter eſtrangement from him by nature, as alſo of thy woful miſery by reaſon of that eſtrangement. A deep ſenſe of our Eſtrangement from Chriſt, and of our miſery by reaſon of that eſtrangement, is one good ſtep towards a conjugal-Union and relation to him, and without the one, we are never

like to attain unto the other. Labour, therefore for this.

1. Labour to be deeply ſenſible of your eſtrangment from Chriſt by nature: Naturally we are all ſtrangers to Chriſt, ſtrangers to all conjugal-Union & Communion with him: We know not what any ſuch thing means: As 'twas with the Epheſians, ſo 'tis with us all by nature, they were and we are *without Chriſt in the World*, Eph. 2. 12. And not onely *without him*, *but* alſo *far from him* as it ſollowes, v. 13. I may truly ſay to every natural man and woman in this, as *Peter* did to *Simon* in another caſe, *Acts*. 8. 21. *Thou haſt neither part nor Lot in this matter*; Thou knoweſt not what Union and Communion which this ſweet Lord means: Yea, not onely are we by nature eſtranged from Chriſt; but moreover we are at Enmity with him, and fill'd with hatred and oppoſition againſt him; we, as thoſe mentioned, *Lu*. 19. 14. *Do hate him, and would not have him to reign over us*: Naturally we are at Enmity with Chriſt, and with every thing that is his, with his Perſon, with his Preſence, with his Spirit, with his Kingdome, with his Lawes and Ordinances, with his Graces, with his Righteouſneſs, and the like: His perſon is too holy for us, his preſence, too pure, his Spirit too convincing, his Kingdom to Spiritual, his Laws and Ordinances too ſtrict, his Graces too bright, his Righteouſneſs to oppoſite to

ſelf;

ſelf; and ſo we hate all, and are at Enmity with all: Yea, we are at Enmity with the very way of Life and Salvation by him: *Touching the Goſpel they are Enemies*, ſayes the *Apoſtle*, which is ſpoken of the Jews, but true of all by nature, *Rom.* 11. 28. We would live, but not by Chriſt: We would be Saved, but not by Chriſt: Thus naturally we are all eſtranged from him; and thus high does our eſtrangment riſe, which we muſt be deeply ſenſible of, if ever we get Union and Communion in a conjugal way with him: Therefore work this a little upon your thoughts, till yon find your heart begin to bleed and relent over it.

2. Labour to be deeply ſenſible of your exceeding great miſery by reaſon of this eſtrangment: As we are all naturally without Chriſt; ſo our miſery herein is exceeding great: So much the *Apoſtle* holds forth, in the place before quoted, *Eph.* 2. 12. Where he ſpeakes of our being *without Chriſt*, as our miſery; yea, as the ſpring and Foundation of all our miſery; and therefore that is firſt mentioned: the Epheſians were, and we are (as he there tells us) *without the Covenant*, *without hope*, *and without God in the World*; miſery enough for any Soul to lye under; and the inlet and Foundation of all is, their and our being *without Chriſt*: As to have Chriſt (ſays a learned Interpreter upon this place) is the Foundation of all good; ſo, to be

without Christ is the beginning and foundation of all evil; an inlet into all woe and misery, and what leaves us in a most deplored state for ever: Take a taste, and but a taste of this your misery, and then work the sense of it upon your own Souls.

1. Being without Christ, you are destitute of all good, you are without Life, without Grace, without Peace without Pardon, without Comfort, without Righteousness, without Heaven, without Salvation, *without Hope, and without God* (as you have it in the same place) *Eph.* 2. 2. without the Favour of God, without the Presence of God, without the Life of God, without the Image of God, without the Spirit of God, and being thus without God, you are without all true good, and true happiness; According to the old and true Maxim: *sine Summo bono nihil bonum*: Without the chief good there is nothing good.

2. Being without Christ, you are in Bondage to sin and Satan, which is the worst Bondage in the World. Naturally all are the Slaves and Vassalls of these cruell Lords: Hence we are said *to fulfill the Devils lusts*, *Jo.* 8, 44. and *as the lusts of the Devil, so the wills and lusts of the flesh*, *Eph.* 2. 2. *to be the servants of sin, to serve divers lusts, and pleasures*, and the like: And as naturally all are thus in Bondage to sin and the Devil; so there is no redemption from this Bondage but by Christ, and that in a way

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of Union with him: *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*, saith he himself to the Jews, Jo. 8. 36. They were Glorying in their privilidge, that they were *Abrahams* seed, and never were in Bondage to any man: True, sayes Christ, but ye are in a worse Bondage then a Bondage to man, in Bondage to sin, in Bondage to your lusts: For *he that committeth sin is the servant of sin*; and this Bondage none but the Son can free you from; and therefore, untill freed by him, you remain under it. O how sore a Bondage is this? To be under the command of sin, to be at the beck of every base, unclean lust, and to be carried *Captive by the Devil at his will*: This is such a Bondage as that the Bondage of Israel under their task-makers in *Egypt*, and the bondage of *Turkish* slaves, who are kept at the Oar and Galley is freedom to it; as to serve Christ is the greatest liberty, so to serve sin is the cruellest Bondage.

3. Being without Christ, and Union with Christ, you are rejected of God: *Know ye not* (sayes the Apostle:) *that except Christ be in you, ye are Reprobates*: 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Know ye not?* As if he should say, 'tis a most clear, manifest, and evident truth, that unless you have Union with Christ, you are Reprobates; *i. e.* you are unapproved of God, you are out of his Favour, both your persons and services are rejected by him: To the same purpose

is that, *Gal.* 4. 22. Where we read, of 2 Mothers, and 2 Sons: The two Mothers were types of the 2 Covenants, the Covenant of works, and the Covenant of Grace, as appears by *v.* 24. The 2 Sons are types of 2 sorts of persons living in the Church; one born after the flesh, the other by promise; one belonging to the first, the other to the second Covenant: Well, what's the condition of these? Why, the one is in a state of rejection, and the other of acceptation: They, that belong to the second Covenant are owned, and embraced in the arms of Love; the other are cast out (as you may see in the sequel of the Chap:) Besides, all our acceptation with God is in Christ, and through Christ, *Eph.* 1. 6. Out of him therefore we are in a state of rejection: O, how sad does this speak your condition to be? for men, yea, for good men to reject, and disown us, is what may be born, especially when God ownes, and smiles: But for God to disown, and reject us, this is terrible indeed, though all the World should own us, and smile upon us: How terrible is that word? *Reprobate silver shall men call them: for the Lord hath rejected them*, Jer. 6. 30--- If God ownes, and smiles, 'tis no matter who frowns; but if he frowns, and rejects, who can own or smile to the relief of the Soul?

4. Being without Christ, you are under the Law, and so under the curse; and how

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ſad is this? as there are but 2 Covenants, the old, and the new; and but 2 heads of thoſe Covenants; the firſt, or the ſecond Adam; ſo all men do belong to, and are found in the one or the other of theſe: Whilſt therefore you are ſtrangers to Chriſt, you are under the Law, and being under the Law you are under the curſe: For, ſayes the *Apoſtle*, *As many as are under the Law are under the curſe: For it is Written, curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are Written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. 3, 10. The Law has no pitty, no ſparing for offenders; But for every breach thereof lays the Soul under the curſe: Now, we have all broken the Law, we all broke it in Adam, being in him as in an head; and we have all broken it 10. Thouſand times over in our own perſons; and by both are fallen under the curſe thereof: And, Soul, doſt thou know what the curſe of the Law means? It carries in it Death and condemnation for ever: Being under the Law, we are curſed in our perſons, and curſed in our comforts: The wrath of God lies upon our ſouls, and the curſe of God is in all our enjoyments, our very Bleſſings are accurſt to us, *Mal.* 2. 2. We read in Scripture of *the people of God's curſe*; and thou art one of them, Soul, who ever thou art, that art out of Chriſt: O how woeful, how deplorable a condition is this!

5. Being

5. Being without Christ, and estranged from Christ, you lie under the guilt of innumerable sins, which you alone must bear for ever? 'tis in, and by Christ alone, that Souls are Discharg'd from the guilt of sin: And who are they, whom he discharges from guilt; but such as are found in him, are under a Marriage-Covenant with him? those *his Blood cleanses from all sin*, 1 Jo. 1, 7. and *in him have they redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveness of sin*, Eph. 1, 7. As for others, he tells them plainly *they shall die in their sins*, Jo. 8. 24. O, how sad a condition is this? Soul, thou art guilty of multitudes of sins, the least of which has evil enough in it to damn thee eternally: Thou hast thousands, & 10 thousands of Scarlet, Crimson sins, sins cloathed with black and crying aggravations, lying upon thee; and to have all these in the full weight of the guilt and punishment of them charged upon thee by the great God for ever, how miserable does this speak thy condition to be.

6. Being estranged from Christ, you are under a necessity of sinning, and so of great'ning your own damnation daily: A man out of Christ does do, can do nothing but sin; for *he is not subject to the Law of God, nor can he be*, Rom. 8. 8. And as he is ever sinning, so he is ever *treasuring up wrath unto himself*, Ro. 2. 5. O, how sad a condition is this? This is *Dura necessitas* (as *Austin* calls it) and speaks a mans

mans condition to be very doleful: To be always ſinning againſt God, and alwayes treaſuring up wrath to a man's own Soul, this is next to Hell, in ſome ſort worſe. To give you thee Sum of all,

Being eſtranged from Chriſt, you have nothing to ſatisfie Divine juſtice, which is ready to ſeize upon you; nothing to pacifie Divine wrath, which is ready to break forth againſt you; nothing to ſtand betweeu Divin revenges and your ſinful ſouls: What ſhall I ſay? you have many accuſers, and by them many heavy charges brought in againſt you, and being without Chriſt, you have no Advocate to plead your cauſe, none to ſpeak a good word in Heaven for you: and is not that ſad? you are deeply in debt, you owe your 10 thouſand talents to Divine juſtice, and being without Chriſt, you have nothing to pay, but are in danger of being caſt into the Priſon of eternal darkneſs, whence there is no redemption: And is not that ſad? you are under an obligation to much Duty, and being without Chriſt, you are under an utter impoſſibility of performing any of it acceptably: You are under a judgment of condemnation, and being without Chriſt you have nothing that can ſecure you one day, one hour, one moment more on this ſide everlaſting Burnings: and O how ſad, and miſerable is this! Thus you ſee, both your eſtrangment from Chriſt, and alſo your miſery (in part) by reaſon of

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that estrangment. Now, as ever you would get Union and Communion with him, labour to be deeply sensible of both these.

2. Would'st thou indeed be Espoused to Christ? Then labour to be soundly convinced, and deeply sensible of the greatness, and Hainousness of the sin of refusing Christ, and the offers of his Love; poor Soul, thou standest it out against Christ, he wooes, and calls, and invites thee to himself; but thou slightest, and refusest all, and this thou thinkest a small matter; but let me tell thee, this is a most hainous and crying sin: To Swear, to Murder, to Steal, to be Drunk, to be Unclean, and the like, these thou look'st upon as black and horred things: Indeed well thou mai'st; for they are sins of a more then ordinary hainous and abominable nature: But yet know, that thy sin in rejecting Christ, and the offers of his Love, is greater, and more provoking then all these: This indeed is the great sin, and the sin thou must in a especial manner be sensible of; if ever thou art United to Christ; so much Christ himself tells us, in that known place, *Joh.* 16. 8, 9. *he*, sayes he (speaking of the Spirit, whom he promised to send) *shall convince the World of sin, because they believe not in me*: unbelief then is the great sin that the Spirit convinces souls of: And what's unbelief, but the neglect and refusal of Christ, and the

the offers of his Love made to us in the Gospel? He shall convince the World of sin; because they believe not in me; *i.e. de illo magno & grandi incredulitatis peccato:* He shall convince them of that grand sin of unbelief (as a learned man expounds it) as if Christ should say, he shall make men see the black and hainous nature of the sin of rejecting me, and my Love: He shall humble them for it, and set them a bleeding over it: This sin of rejecting Christ, some of the Shcool-men have called *Maximum peccatum*, the greatest sin of all: And indeed, next to the unpardonable sin, what greater? This is a sin most directly, and immediately against Christ and the Gospel: O for a vile wretched sinner to shut the door of his soul against Christ, the King of Glory, and deny him entertainment, to refuse and reject the free and frequent offers of him and his Love, how great a sin must this be? And soul, to convince thee the better of it, and make thee the more afraid of it, I shall suggest a few considerations to thee, holding forth a little of its black and horred evil.

1 Consider, that the neglect and refusal of Christ & his Love is a sin against a special & eminent command, and therefore a great & crying sin: The greater and more eminent the command is, which we transgress and sin against; the greater our sin and guilt is in transgressing that command: Now, God does not onely command us to receive and

and embrace Christ and his Love; but this command of his is a great, signal, and eminent command: So *St John* tells us, 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. *This is his commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*: What is it *to believe on the name of Jesus Christ*; but to receive and embrace Christ offering himself in the Gospel to us, and to live upon him, having so received and embraced him? Now (sayes he) *this is his commandment*, his great, his special commandment, his commandment in a most signal, & eminent manner; and Christ himself asserts the same thing, *Joh.* 6. 28, 29. In the 28 *v.* They ask him, *what shall we do, that we may work the Work of God*? His answer in the 29. *v.* is, *This is the Work of God, that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent*: i. e. That ye receive and embrace me, and live upon me, by believing: This is [the] Work of God, the great work which he commands you, and expects from you: Believing (as *Calvin* observes upon this place) is not called *the Work of God*; because 'tis of Gods operation (as you have it else where) or that which God works in us; but because 'tis the great thing which he commands, and requires of us. To reject, and refuse Christ then, is a sin against a signal and eminent command; indeed against the great command of the Gospel; and therefore must needs be a great, and crying sin: more particularly:

Non quia efficit deus in nobis sed quid requirit Christus docet Calv. in Loc.

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1. The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt, and his love, is a ſin againſt a clear and expreſs command of God, a command wherein the authority of God does peculiarly and eminently ſhine forth: So much is held forth in the place mentioned before 1 *Joh.* 3. 28. *this is his commandment* (ſays he ſpeaking of the commandment of Faith) his expreſs Commandment, a Commandment wherein his authority is evidently and peculiarly ſeen; the authority of God ſhines forth in all his commands, but eſpecially in this above the reſt: Therefore this you ſee has an emphaſie put upon it: *this is his commandment*: Now the more clearly and eminently the authority of God ſhines forth in any command, the greater our ſin and guilt is in tranſgreſſing that command.

2. The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt and his love, is a ſin againſt a command, wherein the heart of God and Chriſt does much lye; and is therefore a great ſin; This is a true Rule: That the more the mind or heart of the Law-Giver is in any law or command, the greater is our ſin and guilt in the breach and tranſgreſſion of that law or command: Now God's command to us to receive Chriſt by believing, is a command wherein his own heart, as well as the heart of Chriſt, does much lye: indeed there is nothing in all the World, that the heart of God and Chriſt is more ſet upon, or deſirous of, then this; that Souls ſhould embrace

embrace Christ by believing, and become one with him in a Marriage-Covenant: Witness the freeness of their offers, the frequency of their calls, the importunateness of their pleas, the patientness of their waitings, the affectionateness of their entreaties, the friendliness of their upbraidings, the pathetickalness of their lamentings, the sweetness of their wooings, the unweariedness of their drawings, and the graciousness of their dealings in reference hereunto: But you have already seen, how much the heart of Christ, and in him the heart of the Father is in this business: now to transgress such a command, a command wherein the heart of God and Christ does so much lye, and to run counter to that, which they so much desire, O what a sin must this needs be?

The neglect and refusal of Christ, is a sin against a command which has vertually all the commands of God in it, and so in the breach and transgression thereof we break and transgress all; and O how great a sin then must this be? to believe on Christ is comprehensive of all that God commands and requires of us; this is so his Commandment, as that in obeying this we obey all; And in violating this we violate all; and so he esteems and accounts it: This is evident from *Joh. 6. 28, 29. What shall we do (say they) that we may work the works of God? This is the work of God* (sayes Christ) *to believe on him*

him whom he hath ſent: Pray, mark, they ſpeak of [works] in the plural Number: They would know what all thoſe works were which God requir'd, and what the extent of the command was: And Chriſt in his Anſwer reduces all to one, and that is Faith; by which he ſhews that as all is vain without Faith, ſo Faith is vertually all that God requires: *This is the Work of God*: (ſays he) as if he ſhould ſay, here's all in one, to believe on, and receive me is comprehenſive of all; and accordingly, my beloved, to reject Chriſt and his love is to break all at once, and to violate all at once? 'Tis to rebel againſt and poure contempt upon the whole mind and will of God at once, and in effect to renounce all duty and allegiance to him: Suitable whereunto is the obſervations of a learned Man upon that place, *Joh.* 16. 8, 9. *Chriſt here* (ſays he) *calls unbelief* [*Sin*] *Simply and abſolutly becauſe that ſin comprehends all ſin in it*: O how great a ſin then muſt this be?

Loquuti erant de operibus, Chriſtus ad unum opus eos revocat, hoc eſt, ad fidem, quo ſignificat quicquid extra fidem homines moliuntur inutile ac vanum eſſe, ſolam vero fidem ſufficere. Calv. in Loc.

Appellat Chriſtus infidelitatem ſimpliciter peccatum, quia peccatum infidelitatis omne peccatum complectitur. Gher.

4. The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt, is a ſin againſt a command of much love: All Gods commands have love in them: They are deſign'd by him for our good (as the Scripture tells us) but eſpecially

this command of his, that we ſhould receive and embrace his Son: For what is this command, but a command to us, to be ſaved, a command to us, to be happy? What is this, but a commanding of us, to Live for ever more, to be eternally bleſſed, in and with himſelf? And O how great a ſin muſt the tranſgreſſion of ſuch a command be? Did God command us any hard or ſevere thing, ſomething that tended to our prejudice, and not our happineſs, that were ſomewhat; but when he commands us nothing but to be happy, and to be happy in the beſt way: O how great a ſin muſt it be to tranſgreſs ſuch a command?

2. Conſider, the neglect and refuſal of Chriſt is a ſin, which in a peculiar manner derogates from him, and poures great contempt upon him, and therefore a great ſin: The more contempt any ſin poures upon Chriſt, and the more it derogates from him, the greater that ſin is: Now what ſin derogates more from Chriſt, or poures greater contempt upon him, then the neglect and refuſal of him, offering himſelf to us, does? This is a ſin which takes the Crown off from Chriſt's head, and throwes it in the Duſt: It every way, and in all reſpects poures great contempt upon him.

First, this ſin vilifies and poures contempt upon the Perſon of Chriſt: Chriſt's Perſon is infinitely excellent, and infinitely amiable,

amiable, and accordingly to vilifie and contemn his Person must be a great sin, and contract great guilt, and this the refusal of him, does: Hence, call'd *a treading under foot of the Son of God* (which Argues the highest contempt imaginable) *Heb.* 10. 29. Every refusal of Christ carries that Language concerning him in it, *Isa.* 53. 2. *When we see him, there is no Beauty in him, for which we should desire him: He has neither form, nor comliness in him*: He is a person of no worth, no desireableness: O what contempt is this to be cast upon Christ, and how much does it derogate from him?

2. This sin vilifies, and poures contempt upon the work, office, and undertaking of Christ, as Mediator; upon all that he has done, and suffer'd, with all the riches of his Grace, and Love, manifested therein; Hence 'tis call'd, as *a treading of the Son of God under foot, so an accounting his Blood a common and an unholy thing*, a thing of no worth, no use, no value, no excellency, *Heb.* 10. 29. Great, my Beloved, was the work, and undertaking of Christ, as our Mediator, and great were the things, which he both did and suffer'd in the discharge of that work and undertaking; great also was his Grace, and Love towards us in all, and accordingly, great must our sin and guilt be, in pouring contempt thereon, which we do by our refusing of him; Hereby we pour contempt upon

Valde indignum est sanguinem Christi, qui sanctificationis nostræ materia est profanare. Calv. in Loc.

all his acts and all his offices, as Mediator, upon all his Merits, and all his Purchases, upon all his Grace and Love in bleeding and Dying for us; We do hereby in effect say, that neither Christ, nor any thing which he has purchas'd, is worth accepting and embracing: That we had rather, that he had never dyed, never become a days-man between God and us; that he might have keept his Blood to himself, and we will not thank him for shedding of it; that we need neither him, nor any thing that is his: Hereby we do in effect say, that the whole Gospel is a Cheat, a lie, a meer Delusion: That Christ is an hard Master, and rules with Rigour; that Salvation is little worth, and the like. O what horred contempt of Christ is this?

3. This sin plainly preferrs a poor, Base, Vile lust before Christ, and all the Glorious Riches and Treasures of Christ: and O what contempt of him is this? Why do men refuse Christ, and the offers of his Love? Surely 'tis for the sake, and from the Love of some lust or other, either *the lust of the Flesh, the lust of the Eye, or the pride of Life*, and if so, then by refusing of him they do really prefer this Lust before him, and all the Treasures of his Grace and Love: And thus indeed you find it to be, *Mat.* 22. *Beginning*. as also *Luke*, 14. 18, 19, 20. Where Christ offers himself, withall his Treasures, to poor Sinners, who yet slight and refuse both him

him and them: And why ſo? *The one hath a farm, the other a Merchandize*, and all have ſome carnal concern, to mind: the Sum is, they have a luſt to be ſatisfied; and therefore Chriſt, and all the Treaſures of his Love, muſt be rejected; By refuſing of Chriſt we do in effect ſay, that there is more good, more ſweetneſs, more happineſs in a luſt, in a little carnall, worldly pleaſure and advantage, then there is in Chriſt, and all that is his: Hereby we do in effect ſay, that men are deceiv'd in Chriſt, that the Word of God makes a falſe report of him, that he is not ſuch a Saviour, nor is his Salvation ſo great as the one, and the other is repreſented to be: O what contempt is this to be caſt upon Chriſt? *Eſau* (yow know) is ſaid *to deſpiſe his Birth right*; and how? *By preferring a meſs of pottage or a morſel of Meat before it*, Gen. 25. 34. But O how much more do we contemn Chriſt and his Love by preferring a baſe, vile luſt before him and it? Surely greater contempt of Chriſt than this can't well be found: And how great then muſt the ſin of the refuſal of Chriſt be, and how much ſhould we tremble at it?

3. Conſider, that the neglect and refuſal of Chriſt is a ſin which in an eminent manner darkens and oppoſes the Glory of God, and reflects the higheſt Diſhonour upon him of all others; and therefore a great ſin: The more any ſin darkens and

opposes the Glory of God, the greater the guilt of that sin is: For (first) the more any sin opposes the Glory of God, and reflects Dishonour upon him, the more contrary it is to the highest good; and the more contrary any sin is to the highest good, the greater the guilt of it must needs be: And Secondly, the more any sin opposes the Glory of God, and reflects Dishonour upon him, the more it thwarts and contradicts the highest end of Man; and the more any sin thwarts and contradicts the highest end of Man, the greater the guilt of that sin is:

Now the neglect and refusal of Christ is what eminently opposes the Glory of God, and reflects Dishonour upon him: The reception and entertainment of Christ puts an honour upon the Father; Indeed every act of Faith honours God, *Rom.* 4. 20. And especially this great and Fundamental act of Faith, in embracing Christ: So on the other hand, the neglect and refusal of Christ is what reflects Dishonour upon God, it throws his Glory in the dust; and hence 'tis, that this sin is so exceeding provoking to him, as in the Scripture it is represented to be: Particularly take here two things.

1. This sin of refusing Christ is what slights and contemns all the Glorious excellencies and perfections of God at once; and so can't but cast very great Dishonour upon him, and be very opposite to his Glory: In Christ, my Beloved, all the Glo-

Glorious excellencies and perfections of God are eminently manifested and displayed: In him do all the Glorious counsels of his Grace and Love meet, and in refusing him we despise and poure contempt upon all. In him does his love eminently shine forth, and the fulness of it rest, 1 *Joh.* 4. 9, 10. In him is his Justice, Righteousness, and Holiness eminently manifested and displayed, *Rom.* 3. 25, 26. In him does his wisdom, yea, his manifold wisdom, appear and reveal its self: In a word, whole God is manifested and revealed in him, and withall tender'd to the embraces of our Faith and Love: In every offer of Christ made to us in the Gospel, God does in effect say to us, what ever I am, or can do, as God, that I'le be to, and do for you, to make you happy for ever: accordingly to refuse Christ must needs poure contempt upon all: It slights and poures contempt upon the Grace of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, the justice of God, the Holiness of God, the Fulness and All-sufficiency of God, and all the Ancient Glorious counsels of his Love concerning Souls: to refuse Christ is in effect to say, that the Grace of God is no Grace, at least not worthy of our acceptance: That his justice and holiness are not to be regarded, and that we value them not: That his wisdom is folly,

Tota æterni patris complacentia in solo filio incarnato acquiescit residet & quasi deposita est, Chemn.

and his power weakneſs; that his fulneſs has little in it, and is no way able to ſatisfie us, and make us happy: that a broken Ciſtern is as good, as that Fountain of living waters: And hereby we down-right deny his Faithfulneſs, and put the lie upon him, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. We do in effect ſay, that the God of truth is a liar, that his witneſs and teſtimony is not to be credited, that his word of promiſe is a meer deluſion, and for no other uſe, then to beguile Souls: O what contempt, what Diſhonour muſt all this caſt upon the bleſſed God, and what horrible wickedneſs muſt it be? *to make God a liar* (ſayes a Learned Man) *is an horrible and execrable impiety: thereby we take that from him which is moſt dear and proper to him.* O tremble, Soul, tremble at the Blackneſs and helliſhneſs of this ſin.

Deum facere mendacem horribilis eſt & execranda impietas quia tunc quod illi maxime proprium eripitur, Calv. in Lec.

2. This ſin of refuſing Chriſt is what is directly oppoſite to the higheſt deſign of God for his own Glory, and Robs him of that Glory which is moſt dear to him: what, my Beloved, was the higheſt deſign that ever God laid and carried on for his own Glory? Verily 'twas Chriſt, and the Salvation of ſinners by Chriſt: He deſign'd himſelf a revenue of Glory in making the World, and he does deſign himſelf a revenue of Glory in all he does in governing the World: But that wherein he has deſign'd the higheſt revenue of Glory to himſelf,

himſelf, is the miſtery of Chriſt, and Salvation by Chriſt: So much is evident from *Epe.* 1. 11, 12, 14. *In whom* ſayes he ſpeaking of Chriſt) *We have obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will, that we ſhould be to the praiſe of his Glory*; And again, *v.* 14. *unto the praiſe of his Glory*: The ſum is this, that God's Glory was his great end in the diſpenſation of Chriſt, and our Salvation by him; and alſo that in and by that diſpenſation he did deſign the higheſt revenue of Glory to himſelf: For pray obſerve, firſt he calls it *the praiſe of his Glory*, the ſplendor, and higheſt emanation of his Glory: (Secondly) he repeats this deſign of God *to the praiſe of his Glory*, and again, *to the praiſe of his Glory*; which notes this to be his grand deſign for his Glory. Again, what is that Glory that is moſt dear to God? Verily 'tis the Glory of his Grace: Grace is his darling attribute, and the Glory of his Grace is moſt dear to him: Hence this has been peculiarly his deſign in the whole of the miſtery of Chriſt: So the ſame *Apoſtle* tells us, *Epi.* 1.6. Who having before ſpoken of the great miſteries of predeſtination and redemption by Chriſt; here in the 6. *v.* tells you, what was God's great deſign in all, viz: *The praiſe of the Glory of his Grace*: 'Tis the crowning of Grace, and the enthroning of Grace, which God in a peculiar manner delights

in:

sin: Now if the highest design of God for his own Glory be by the mistery of Christ, and our Salvation by Christ, and the Glory of his Grace be most dear to him; then 'tis clear, that our refusing of Christ is most opposite to the highest design that God ever carried on for his own Glory, and Robs him of that Glory which is most dear to him: For alas! This is in effect to say, that God has laid out no Grace upon sinners in the dispensation of Christ, and that he deserves no Glory upon the account of that dispensation: This is in effect to tell him, that neither his Christ, nor his Grace in him, is worth minding, worth receiving; and that we are no wayes beholding to him for the one, or the other: And O what Dishonour must this reflect upon God, and how darkening to his Glory? And accordingly, Soul, let thee and I tremble at it, and at the Blackness and horridness of that sin, that has such a dreadful effect.

4. Consider, that the neglect and refusal of Christ, is a sin which directly and immediatly murders the soul, and damns it eternally; and therefore must needs be a great sin: That sin that does most directly and immediatly murder the Soul, and destroy it eternally, that must needs be a great sin, and should be greatly dreaded by us: And what sin is it that does this, but our neglect and refusal of Christ? And, Soul, that thou may'st be the more deeply con-

convinced of this, ſeriouſly weigh theſe following propoſitions.

First, that the neglect and refuſal of Chriſt is a ſin, which rejects the onely remedy of ſinful ſouls: Poor Sinners are in themſelves dead, loſt, undone, and periſhing for ever: They are ſick, and ſick to death; they are ſinful, and ſinful to damnation; and there is one, and but one remedy for them, and that's Chriſt; Chriſt and his Blood, Chriſt and his Grace, Chriſt and his fulneſs; Beſides this, *there is no Balm in Gilead, no Phyſitian there for them: neither is there Salvation in any other*, Acts. 4. 14. Therefore by refuſing and rejecting him, they refuſe and reject the onely remedy: He indeed is a Compleat, as well as an onely, remedy: He is able, and as willing, as *he is able, to ſave to the very uttermoſt*, as the Scripture tells us: But they by rejecting of him exclude themſelves from his ſaving efficacy, and ſo thereby do directly murder their own ſouls.

2. That the neglect and refuſal of Chriſt is a ſin, which bindes all a mans other ſins faſt to him: 'Tis a great and weighty ſaying which a worthy Divine has. Unbelief, ſayes he (which is properly the neglect and refuſal of Chriſt) bindes all a mans ſins faſt to his Soul, and Damnation faſt to his ſins: 'Tis indeed the Bond of all our guilt, and all our miſery; that which makes the curſe cleave cloſe to us for ever: And while a man remains in this ſin, 'tis impoſſible,

ble, that he should be acquitted and discharged from the guilt of any one of all his sins: 'Tis (I remember) Austin's observation upon that place, Joh. 16. 8, 9. Where Christ tells us, *That his Spirit shall convince the World of Sin, because they believe not in him*: Christ (sayes he) *instances in the sin of infidelity in a special manner, because that sin remaining, all our other sins remain: But that being taken away, all others are forgiven*: Faith (as one of the Ancients expresses it) *delet omnia peccata*, blots out all sins; but unbelief that bindes all fast upon us: Hence that word of Christ, *If ye believe not, ye shall dye in your sins*: i. e. your sins shall cleave close to you to the very death, Jo. 8. 24. This will be further evident in the next proposition: Therefore

Ponit hoc peccatum infidelitatis specialiter, quia hoc manente cætera manent, hoc decedente cætera remittuntur, Aug.

3. That though all sin be killing and damning, yet no sin shall ever damn or destroy us, unless we add thereunto the sin of the neglect and refusal of Christ: 'Tis true, every sin is damning; sin within, sin without: *The wages of sin is death, Rom. 6. last.* And the *Apostle* tells us, *there is a just recompence of reward due to every transgression and disobedience, Heb. 1. 2.* But though every sin be damning, yet what ever a mans sins are, though never so many, never so great; they shall, they can never damn him, in case he receives, and embraces

braces Christ: Nor indeed can any of all a mans sins be said to be the immediate cause of his damnation, but his refusing of Christ: Indeed under the Law the immediate cause of mens perishing was sin in general: But under the Gospel the onely immediate cause of mens perishing is the rejection of Christ and his Grace through unbelief: So much Christ himself tells us in that known place, *Joh.* 3. 18. *He that believeth on the Son is not condemned, but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the onely begotten Son of God: He that believeth on Christ is not condemned*: And why so? Is it because he has no sins to condemn him? No, but because believing on Christ all his sins are done away: But *he that believeth not on him is condemn'd already*: And why? Is it because he is a sinner in general, or because his sins are many and great sins? No, but *because he hath not believed on the name of the onely begotten Son of God*: The sum of all is this: The immediate cause of mens condemnation is not this sin or that sin, but their refusing of Christ by unbelief: Hence you have it so frequently up and down the Gospel: *He that believeth shall be saved; He that believeth not shall be damned*, and the like: Well then, if our refusing of Christ be the rejecting of the onely remedy of sinful Souls; if it be what

Meritum damnationis juxta Evangelium, non est peccatum, sed perseverantia finalis in peccato infidelitatis, Twis. vind. gra.

bindes

bindes all a mans sins fast upon him; and if none of all a mans other sins, though many and great, should or could ever damn him, were not this sin of refusing Christ added to them; then certainly this is that sin which does most directly and immediatly murder the Soul: O how great a sin then does this speak it to be? Murder is a great sin, an iniquity to be punished by the judge; nor do we look upon a murderer fit to live: But no murder like to Soul-murder, nor should we suffer this Soul-murderer to live one moment.

4. Consider, that the neglect and refusal of Christ is a sin which argues you to be really in Love with your sins, which truly and indeed chooses Death rather then Life, loves Darknes more then Light, and which leaves you without the least colour of excuse or room of appeal for ever: And O what a black and horrid sin must this then be? A little of each.

1. This sin of neglecting and refusing Christ, is, what really argues you to be in Love with your sins, and to have slight thoughts of them: For men to act sin is bad, but to have slight thoughts of sin, and to be in Love with it, is much worse; sin being against an infinite good, even infinitly contrary to the blessed God, has in a sort an infinite evil in it; and to be in love with that which has an infinite evil in it, O how dreadful a thing is this? Yet this your refusal of Christ carries in it: For

pray,

pray, mark, had you not ſlight thoughts of ſin, you would not refuſe the pardon of ſin, when offer'd you; but would account it worthy of all acceptation; and were you not in Love with your ſins, yea, greatly in Love with them, you would not chooſe and deſire to continue in your ſins; much leſs would you refuſe and reject ſo great a good, as Chriſt is, for the ſake of your ſins: Should a condemn'd Malefactor refuſe the Kings free pardon, would not this argue him to have ſlight thoughts of Death; yea, to be in Love with it, and to prefer it before life? As clearly does your refuſing of Chriſt argue you to have ſlight thoughts of ſin, and to be in Love with it: O were you not in Love with your ſins, you would be glad of a diſcharge and deliverance from them, and would withall readineſs and joyfulneſs embrace it, when freely offer'd to you, as in Chriſt it is.

2. This ſin of refuſing Chriſt is what truly and indeed ſpeaks you to love darkneſs more then light, and to chooſe death rather then life; 'Tis what prefers ſin and death before Chriſt, and life, and Grace: O what a black ſin then muſt it be? This Chriſt himſelf aſſerts concerning it, and that as an high aggravation of it, and what makes it doubly damning, *Joh.* 3. 19. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the World, and men loved darkneſs, rather then light.* Chriſt and the good things

things of Christ are here call'd light; on the other hand sin and death, sin and the miseries that attend it, are call'd darkness: Now (sayes Christ) men by unbelief and refusing of me do declare, that they love this darkness before this Light: Men by refusing of me do in effect love, choose, prefer sin, and death, and darkness before me, and my Grace, me and that eternal life which I would give them: O what a sin is this? Christ may truly say to Sinners, as *Moses* to them of old, *Deut.* 30. 19. *I call Heaven, and Earth to record this day, that I have set before you, Life and Death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that ye may live*: Now, for them to choose death and reject life, to choose the curse and reject the blessing: This is a dreadful sin indeed and the more dreadful: On the one hand, because the light is so lovely and amiable; and on the other hand, the darkness is so odious & terrible: as also because the obligations which lie upon us to love, choose, and prefer the light before darkness, are so weighty and forcible; For Christ earnestly desires it, he graciously counsells it, he strictly commands it, and no less then a whole eternity of Glorious and unspeakable happiness depends upon it: O think of these things.

3. This sin of refusing Christ is a sin which leaves you without the least colour of excuse, or room of appeal for ever; which

which muſt argue it to be a great ſin indeed: Firſt, it leaves you without the leaſt colour of excuſe, without the leaſt coulour of excuſe for ſin, and without the leaſt colour of excuſe why you ſhould not die for ſin: This Chriſt himſelf is expreſs in, *Joh.* 15.22. *If I had not come, and ſpoken to them, they had not had ſin, but now they have no Cloak for their ſin: If I had not come, and ſpoken to them* (viz. in the Goſpel) revealing my Father's will, and offering myſelf and my Grace to them; *They had not had ſin*, i. e. Not ſo great ſin: *But now they have no Cloak*, no excuſe *for their ſin*: Now they have no pretence to make, nothing wherewith to colour or extenuate their ſin: The neglect and refuſal of Chriſt leaves men altogether inexcuſable, and it will do ſo to be ſure in the laſt day: O when God in the day of his righteous judgment ſhall demand of men that have liv'd under the Goſpel, why they ſin'd, and having ſin'd, why they are found in their ſins, and being found in their ſins, why they ſhould not die for ever: what will they have to ſay by way of excuſe or apology for themſelves? Verily nothing; but will be *Speechleſs*, as he is ſaid to be, *Mat.* 22.12. They can't ſay, they were not warned of the evil of ſin: They can't ſay, that pardon and Salvation were not offer'd them: They can't ſay, that the offer was not full, and free, and clear: They can't ſay, they had to do with an hard Maſter; nor can they ſay,

that sin is not worthy of death: They will have nothing to say. Secondly, it leaves you without the least room or place of appeal for ever: I may say here, as 'tis said in another case, 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. *If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?* So if a man sin against the Law by transgressing of it, he may appeal to the Gospel, and the grace of Christ there: But if a man sin against Christ and his Grace offer'd in the Gospel, where then shall he appeal? Verily there is no appeal to be made, no relief to be found for him. If a man be condemn'd at the seat of justice, as having sinn'd against the Law, he may appeal unto the mercy-seat, the throne of Grace, and find sweet relief; but if he sin against the mercy-seat, and the throne of Grace, then he has nothing to appeal to, that may administer relief to him: Now by refusing of Christ we sin against the Throne of Grace, we pull down, what in us lies, the mercy-seat: and where then shall we appeal? O consider these things, and learn by them to dread this sin of refusing Christ: I might say much more to convince you of the hainous evil of it; but let this suffice: Sure I am, 'tis enough to; and had we the due sense of it upon our Spirits, it would make us tremble at it for ever.

3. Wouldst thou indeed be espoused to Christ? Then give not way to the discouragements of sense, but bear up thy Soul

upon the encouragements of Faith, upon such Gospel-principles & considerations, as do tend to draw sinners to Faith in Christ: Possibly, upon reading and considering the woeful misery of thy condition without Christ, and the dreadful hainousness of thy sin and guilt, in thy long and frequent refusing of him, discouragements not a few may arise within; and indeed no sooner usually does a poor Soul look towards Christ, or think of closing with him in a Marriage-Covenant; but presently multitudes of discouragements arise to deter him therefrom: O, says he, what a monstrous sinner am I? How have I despised Christ and his grace? How long have I stood it out against him? I have serv'd my lusts all my dayes, and rejected his calls: To what purpose do I now talk of closing with him? These, and multitudes such like discouragements do arise in the Soul, which being given way to, do effectually keep him from Christ: But if ever, Soul, thou wouldest attain to Union and communion with him, thou must shut thine eyes and heart too against all discouragements of this nature; and though they press in upon thee again and again; yet thrust them out, fixing thine eye and heart upon the encouragements of Faith; dwell much in the thoughts of them, and bear up thy soul upon such Gospel principles and considerations, as do tend to weaken unbelief, & beget Faith in the soul; and for

thy help herein I shal mention some of these encouragements of Faith, or Gospel-principles, which I would have thee to be serious and frequent in the contemplation of.

1. The first Gospel-principle, or encouragement of Faith, which thou shouldst bear up thy Soul upon, and be frequent in the contemplation of, is this; that there is a rich, a glorious, and an overflowing fulness of all good treasured up in Christ for poor Sinners; and that his Grace does abundantly exceed both our wants and sins: 'Tis the work and nature of unbelief, to little and limit the fulness of Christ in the eye of the soul: It shews the soul the multitude of his sins and wants; but it conceals and Locks up Christs treasures and fulness: And, whatever we pretend, the ground of our not closing with Christ, at least one principal one, is this, that we doubt of his fulness, we do not see enough in Christ to supply our wants, and relieve our distresses: Unbelief perswading us, that Christ is not the Christ, the Scripture represents him to be: But, Soul, away with all such apprehensions, and dwell thou in the contemplation of Christ's infinite fulness: Look to him, as one infinitly able to supply thy wants, to pardon thy sins, to heal thy maladies, to subdue thy lusts, to sanctifie thy heart, and to save thy Soul eternally: Look upon him, as the Scripture represents him; The Scripture tells

thee, *That it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell*, Col. 1. 19. All fulneſs of Grace and life, all fulneſs of peace and pardon, all fulneſs of Righteouſneſs and Salvation: There is in Chriſt not onely a fulneſs of abundance, but of redundance, an over-flowing fulneſs; a fulneſs infinitly ſuperabounding our ſins and wants: The Scripture tells us, *That he is able to ſave unto the very uttermoſt, all that come unto God by him*, Heb. 7. 25. Save, able to ſave, able to ſave to the uttermoſt; and that not one or two, but all that come unto God by him: The Scripture ſpeaks of Chriſts *unſearchable riches*, Eph. 3. 8. The Ocean of his Grace is not to be ſounded by the longeſt line of the largeſt created underſtanding: *Paul* experienced the ſuperabounding fulneſs of his Grace, and has left it upon record for our encouragement, 1 *Tim.* 1. 14. *The Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*; it was more then enough: I found more Grace in Chriſt, (as one expreſſes it) then I knew what to do withall; and yet what was this *Paul*? Himſelf tells you in the very *v.* before and after, he was *a Blaſphemer, a Perſecutor, and the chief of Sinners*, a man every way of as many ſins and wants, as thou art: Accordingly view him, and bear up thy Soul in the face of all diſcouragements: Reaſon thus with thy ſelf: True, my condition is ſad, my wants are exceeding many, and my ſins exceeding great: But

what then? *Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no Physitian there?* Is not Christ able to save me, and that to the utmost notwithstanding all: Look, O my soul, yonder is sweet Jesus upon the Throne at the Fathers Right Hand, full of Grace and truth; look upon him, and consider: What are all thy wants to his Riches and fulness? What are all thy miseries and distresses to his Bowels of Mercy? What are all thy sins to the merit of his Blood, thy provocations to his satisfaction? Were thy wants more and greater then they are, his fulness could supply them all; were thy sins greater and more hainous then they are, his Blood could cleanse thee from all: *The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin*, 1 Jo. 1. 7. There is infinitly more worth in his merits to pardon and justifie thee, then there is evil in thy sins to damn & destroy thee: True, I have a Fountain of sin, and guilt, and death in me: But here's a deeper Fountain of Grace, and life, & righteousness in him: see, O my Soul, see how vast and large his treasures of Grace and Glory are, and bear up thy self upon them: O did Sinners dwell more in the view of the Glorious fulness of Christ, they would be more in love with him; and hereby would counter-work and undermine unbelief in one of its greatest artifices, whereby it keeps souls from him. I shall here for thy encouragement onely subjoyn the saying of a worthy Divine. Christ (sayes he) can, and

it becometh him well to give more then my narrow ſoul can receive. If there were ten thouſand thouſand millions of worlds, and as many heavens full of men and Angels, Chriſt would not be pinched to ſupply all their wants, and to fill them all. Chriſt is a Well of Life, but who knoweth how deep it is to the bottom?

2. The ſecond Goſpel-principle or encouragement of Faith which thou ſhould'ſt bear up thy ſoul upon, and be frequent in the contemplation of, is this: That as there is ſuch a Glorious and in-exhauſtible fulneſs in Chriſt, ſo this fulneſs is in him, not for himſelf, but to be diſpenſed and communicated to poor Souls coming to him: True (may the Soul ſay) here's fulneſs enough, riches and treaſures enough of all good in Chriſt; but what's this to me, or wherein does it concern me? Wherein does it concern thee? Why, 'tis wholly thy concern, and the concern of ſuch, as thou art: For what ever fulneſs he has in him, 'tis treaſur'd up in him for Souls, for Sinners, yea, for the worſt of Sinners: How ſweet is that word? *Pſa.* 68. 18. where, ſpeaking of Chriſt, the holy Ghoſt tells us, *that he hath received gifts for men: He hath received gifts.* i. e. He has a fulneſs of all good in his hand, and at his diſpoſe, and this for men: I but I am a devil (ſayes the ſoul) a rebel, & what's this to me? obſerve, what follows, and thou wilt find it concerns thee, yea,

thee especially: *He hath received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also*: Hence also 'tis, that he is said to be made *Head over all things to the Church*, Eph. 1. 22. *He has all fulness dwelling in him*, but 'tis as an head, and so 'tis all for the use and service of the body, for every poor soul that comes to him: And therefore 'tis added, *Head over all things to the Church*. i. e. For the Churches use and service of which he is Head: Take a view of all that fulness that is in Christ, and 'tis all as much and as really for the use and service of such as come to him, and are made members of his body, as the treasures and endowments of the natural head are for the use and service of the natural body, and the members thereof: And O what an encouragement is this to Faith? 'Tis the observation of a learned man upon the place last quoted. *Lest* (saies he) *we should think this great glory of Christ to be a thing that does not concern us, he is here declar'd to be constituted and appointed by the Father to be Head of the whole Church*. Well then, soul, bear up thy self upon this encouragement: Say, look, O my soul, look unto sweet Jesus, who hath received Gifts for men: View him as one that has received a fulness of all Grace from the Father on purpose to be dispens'd and communicated to thee, and

Ne summam illam Christi gloriam putemus aliquid a nobis alienum, esse, testatur illum esse a Deo patre totius Ecclesiæ, Beza.

to

to such as thou art: He has life in him, and he has it for thee; he has peace and pardon in him, and he has it for thee: He has wisdom, and righteousness, Grace, and Glory in him, and he has it for thee, and for such as thou art; and therefore go to him, expect all from him, cast all upon him.

3. The third Gospel-principle or encouragement of Faith, which thou shouldst bear up thy soul upon, and dwell much in the contemplation of, is this, that there is a perfect freedom and willingness in Christ, yea, 'tis even genuine and naturall to him to bestow himself, with all his Glorious riches and fulness, upon poor souls coming to him: Christ (as you heard) has all this fulness in him as an head; so you have it expresly, *Col.* 1. 18, 19. Now as 'tis genuine and naturall to the head to minister influence to the members: So 'tis even genuine and naturall to Christ to communicate his Grace to poor souls: Besides, all that fulness that is in Christ, 'tis in him not as God onely, but as man: 'Tis deposited and treasured up in his human nature: *It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, Col.* 1. 19. *In him* i. e. (as a learned man expounds it (*in the man Christ, or in that human nature in which he dyed and transacted the business of our Salvation*: 'Tis true, the God-head or Divine nature is the first spring

In eo, i. e. *In homine Christo, vel in humana illa natura in qua obivit & administravit negotium salutis nostræ*, Daven.

ſpring or Fountain of all Grace; but the human nature of Chriſt is as it were a ſecond ſpring and Fountain of Grace: That is as a treaſury or Store-houſe, wherein all Grace is laid up for us: Hence 'tis ſaid, *that as the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo he hath given to the Son to have life in himſelf; becauſe he is the Son of man*, Joh. 5. 26, 27. Chriſt as God hath life, i. e. all Grace originally and independently in him, as the Father hath: Indeed as God he is the ſame infinite and independent Fountain of Life and Grace with the Father: but 'tis as man that he is ſaid to have Life and Grace given to him: The ſum then is, That that Glorious fulneſs of Grace that is in Chriſt for Sinners, is Fountain'd up in his human nature, and being Fountain'd up in his human nature it will, and can't but flow, yea, overflow to, and upon poor ſouls, that caſt themſelves upon him: The truth is, 'Tis to charge Chriſt with unkindneſs and unfaithfulneſs both at once, to ſuppoſe him unwilling to communicate himſelf and his fulneſs to Sinners coming to him; and, ſoul, canſt thou find in thy heart to lay ſo black a charge upon ſo ſweet and good a Chriſt? 'Tis the way and work of the devil and unbelief to perſwade Souls, that Chriſt will not receive them, nor communicate his Grace and fulneſs to them; though they ſhould come to him, which they endeavour to do from the conſideration of his greatneſs and holineſs, together

with

with their vileneſs and ſinfulneſs: Chriſt, ſay they, is choice and peculiar in his Love and reſpects, as great Perſons uſe to be: He will know his diſtance, and he will make Sinners know theirs: But, Soul, deal with this, as from the devil and unbelief, reject it as a reproach thrown upon Chriſt, and dwell much in the contemplation of his infinite willingneſs to receive and ſave the worſt of Sinners that come to him: Reaſon it a little with thy ſelf: Why did he become incarnate? Why did he bleed, and die? Why does he woo, and wait, and offer, and call, and ſtrive with poor Sinners to win them to himſelf? Does it not all argue a willingneſs and readineſs in him to give forth both himſelf and his fulneſs to them?

4. The Fourth Goſpel-principle or encouragement of Faith, which thou ſhouldeſt bear up thy ſoul upon, and dwell much in the contemplation of, is this: That the onely ſpring and principle of all that ever Chriſt does for poor Sinners from firſt to laſt is his own Soverain Grace and Love: 'Twas his Love that brought him down from Heaven, and that led him out to Bleed and die for them: Hence *Eph.* 5. 25. he is ſaid *to Love his Church, and give himſelf for it*: 'Tis his Love, his free Love, that firſt draws them to himſelf, and allures them into Covenant with him: *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving kindneſs have I drawn*

thee,

thee, Jer. 31. 3. 'Tis his Love that receives them, that pardons them, that bestows life and Salvation upon them: Hence all is said to be *of Grace*, even the whole of our Salvation, *Eph.* 2. 8. Hence he is represented to us as sitting upon a Throne of Grace, and there 'tis that he invites us to come to him, and from thence gives out all to us, *Heb.* 4. 16. and therefore to that Throne we, though Sinners, may come boldly: He is upon a Throne; and therefore we may assure our selves, that he will do great things for Sinners coming to him; he will act like a King, pardon like a King, save like a King, do all with Kingly greatness and magnificence: And 'tis a Throne of Grace, a Throne that reigns Grace, a Throne whereon Grace sits in imperial Majesty, and decrees all for poor Sinners coming to it; and so does all freely, all in a way of Soverain Grace and Love: Hence that Language, *I will have mercy, because I will have mercy*, I will pardon, because I will pardon, and I will save, because I will save: Now what an encouragement is this to Faith, and how, if rightly weighed and consider'd, would it dash all the pleas of unbelief to pieces, and sweetly draw the Soul on to a close with Christ in a Marriage-Covenant? For pray consider, what is the nature of Soverain Grace and Love? The nature of it is to act from it self to it self without any consideration of any thing in us, without respecting

ſpecting either the worthineſs or the unworthineſs of the creature at all: The nature of it is ſuch, that 'tis neither conſtrain'd to, nor reſtrain'd from doing good to ſouls by any thing either of good or evil in them; but all runs freely: And therefore no matter what I am, though never ſo vile and wretched in my ſelf, while I have to do with ſuch love, and ſuch love is the ſpring of all Chriſt's dealings with me, and Carriages towards me.

5. The Fifth Goſpel-principle or encouragement of Faith, which thou ſhouldeſt bear up thy ſelf upon, and dwell much in the contemptation of, is this: That the great deſign of Chriſt in all his undertakings for, and diſpenſations towards Sinners, is the illuſtrating and enthroning of his own Grace; and the more vile, ſinful, and forlorn a wretch thou art, the more will his Grace be enthroned and illuſtrated in thine acceptance with him. Chriſt in his dealings with and for Sinners does not onely act from a principle of Soverain Grace, but in all he carries on a deſign to enthrone that Grace of his, and to make it Glorious for ever; yea, and he acts, and will act ſutably to ſuch a deſign: 'Tis not what ſuch and ſuch Sinners do or do not deſerve (ſays Chriſt), that I am to mind, but what my Grace can do for them, and what will make moſt for the Glory of that Grace, what will ſet the brighteſt Crown upon its Head: This is evident,

Eph.

Eph. 1. 6. 12. 14. Which was open'd before upon another occasion: Hence those whom he saves, he saves in such a way, as may most lift up his own Grace, his design therein being, *that Grace might reign*, as you have it, *Rom.* 5. 21. Hence you read of his *justifying the ungodly*, *Rom.* 4. 5. He will have his Grace triumph over every Soul, whom he saves. Now what an encouragement is this to Faith? Christ not onely sits upon a Throne of Grace, but also his design in dealing with Sinners is to set his Grace upon the Throne. Sinner, the more vile and sinful thou art, the more suitable it is to Christ's design to save thee; for the more vile and sinful thou art, the greater name and Glory will his Grace get in thine acceptation and Salvation by him: The more vile and sinful thou art, the greater will be the declaration of Grace on Christ's part in thine acceptance and Salvation: O when Christ shall pardon a soul so guilty, receive a soul so sinful, reconcile a soul that is such an enemy, as thou art, how will this declare the Glorious riches of his Grace in the view both of men & Angels? This will *shew forth the exceeding riches of his Grace*, as the the Expression is, *Eph.* 2. 7. And the more vile and sinful thou art, the greater will be the admiration of Grace for ever on thy part; *where* much is forgiven, there will be the return of much Love, much praise, *Luk.* 7. 47. O, who am I (saves the

the ſoul, when once received to mercy, though more then ordinary vile and ſinful) who am I, that I ſhould find Grace in Chriſt's ſight? What, ſuch a rebell, and yet pardon'd? Such an enemy, and yet reconcil'd? Such a Black devil, and yet waſht, and made white in the Blood of the Lamb? Such a Fiend of Hell, and yet made a Favourite of Heaven? Such a filthy, deformed wretch, and yet taken into the pure and Lovely Boſome of ſweet Jeſus? O Grace, Grace! How rich and free is Grace? And O what praiſe and *Hallelujahs* will there be tuned upon the Tongues and ſpirits of ſuch to God and the Lamb for ever? When therefore thou wouldſt go to Chriſt, and diſcouragements ariſe to keep thee back from him, thou ſhouldſt dwell in the thoughts of and bear up thy ſoul upon this conſideration, reaſoning thus with thy ſelf: True I am a vile wretch, the chief of Sinners, one on all accounts worthy to be abhor'd, and caſt off by Chriſt: But what then? Chriſt acts towards Sinners purely from a principle of Grace and Love, he regards neither worthineſs nor unworthineſs; whether a great ſinner or a little ſinner, 'tis all one to him as to his accepting of me: Moreover his deſign is to Crown his Grace, and render that Glorious; and the more vile I am, the more that deſign of his will take in mine acceptation and Salvation. How vile therefore ſoever I am, I will caſt my ſelf upon

him,

him, and put in for an Espousal with him.

6. The sixth Gospel-principle or encouragement of Faith, which thou should'st bear up thy self upon, and dwell much in the contemplation of, is this: That 'tis the Glory and perfection of Christ as Mediator to receive Sinners, and to give out himself and his fulness to them, when they come to him: This, if rightly weighed, will mightily help on Faith, and lift the poor soul over his discouragements into the Bosome and embraces of Jesus Christ: To understand it aright you must know, that Christ has a two-fold Glory and perfection: The Glory and perfection of his Person, as he is the Son of God; and the Glory and perfection of his office, as he is Mediator and head of the second Covenant: the Glory and perfection of his person, as the Son of God, that is infinitly compleat and full, that admits neither of diminution nor augmentation; being unchangeably the same for ever: But the Glory and pefection of his Office, as Mediator, that in a great measure arises from his receiving Sinners, and bestowing himself and his Grace upon them, when they come to him; and the more Sinners he receives, and the more Grace he gives out to them, the greater his Glory and perfection in this respect is: and it may be truly said, that Christ in receiving, and giving out Grace to Sinners, when they

come

come to him, does increaſe the revenue of his own Glory, and more and more compleat and perfect himſelf, as head and Mediator: Hence the *Church* is called *his fulneſs*, Eph. 1.13. *God gave him to be head over all things to the Church which is his Body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all*: Now if the Church is Chriſts fulneſs, then the more that is filled and compleated by his receiving Sinners to himſelf, and giving out Grace to them; the more full and compleat he himſelf, as to his Mediatorie honour and perfection growes: Hence alſo Saints are ſaid to be *the Glory of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 8. 23. As Chriſt alone is their glory, ſo they alſo are his glory: And how his glory? Not onely becauſe they do, or ſhould actually glorifie him; but alſo becauſe he has received them, and laid out his grace upon them; and 'tis his grace onely that ſhines forth in them: Hence that obſervation of *Calvin* upon the place. *They* (ſayes he) *that excell moſt in grace and holineſs, they peculiarly are the glory of Chriſt; becauſe they have nothing but by free gift from Chriſt*: Hence alſo Chriſt tells us, that *he is Glorified in them*, Jo. 17. 10. And he ſayes Expreſly *that the Spirit ſhall Glorifie him, becauſe he ſhall receive of his, and give it unto us*, Jo. 16. 14. By all which it appears, that 'tis the glory and perfection of Chriſt, as Mediator, to receive Sinners,

Quicunq; pietate, & ſanctimonia excellunt, ſunt Chriſti gloria, quia nihil habent niſi dono Chriſti. Calv.

coming to him, and to bestow himself and his grace upon them: In short, my beloved, all that ever Christ has done for, and is made of God to, poor Sinners; all his acts, and all his offices, as Mediator, do receive their ultimate perfection in their full influences on us and our Salvation: And as Christ receives his name and Denomination of a Saviour from his Relation to, and acting for poor Sinners to redeem and save them; so the perfection of this office, and those acts of his do lye in the full accomplishment of our Salvation: And indeed they would all be but vain and weak acts, should he not fully save us, coming to him. O what encouragement is here to Faith, and how must unbelief sink, and die before this consideration, if rightly improv'd? True (may the soul say) I am vile, sinful, and unworthy; but 'tis the honour of Christ to receive me; 'tis his glory to bestow himself and his grace upon me; 'tis his prefection, as Mediator, to accept and save me, and such, as I am; and therefore why should I be discouraged? I will go to him, and cast my self upon him: Thus bear up your souls upon, and encourage your Faith with these Gospel-principles, which is greatly necessary, and will not a little conduce to an Espousal between Christ and you.

4. Would'st thou indeed be Espous'd to Christ? Then take heed of all jealousies of him, and prejudices against him; and be

be sure ever to maintain right thoughts of him. One of the great designs of Satan, and one of the most cursed workings of unbelief, is to prejudice souls against Christ, and to fill them with hard, jealous thoughts of him; which if they can prevail in, they infallibly keep the soul from closing with him in a Marriage-Covenant. If a woman has jealousies and hard thoughts of a man, and be filled with prejudices against him, she is never like to enter into a Marriage-Covenant with him: And no more will a soul close with Christ in a Marriage-Covenant, as long as he is filled with hard thoughts of him, and prejudices against him: Watch therefore against this: The Devil, together with the unbelief of our own hearts, will frame up a thousand strange Notions and representations of Christ in the soul, thereby to prejudice us against Christ; but take heed of all these, and be sure to maintain right thoughts and apprehensions of him; particularly here take onely two things.

1. Be sure to maintain honorable thoughts of his Person: Look upon him as a Person of glory, and as having all excellencies in him: 'Tis the work, and nature of unbelief to darken and obscure the Person of Christ, to make that appear vile and contemptible in the eye of the soul, whereby it does effectually strengthen it self with in him; and indeed there is no-

thing more prevalent to keep the soul from Christ, then an ignorance of, or prejudice against his Personal worth and excellencies: This was that which made the Jewes so generally reject him: *They saw no Beauty in him for which they should desire him, nor did they discern form or comliness in him*; and therefore rejected him, *Isa.* 53. 1, 2. They Look't no further then the outward form, the veil of his flesh; they saw not his Divine Beauty and glory; and so despised him: And, my beloved, unless we look within this veil, and come to view and contemplate him, as a Person of glory, we also shall reject him to our eternal perdition. Pray, observe, 'tis the Person of Christ that puts worth and vertue into all his doings, and all his sufferings; all his offices, and all his promises: 'Tis the worth and excellency of his Person, that makes his Blood so precious, his Promises so sweet, his Righteousness so glorious, his Grace so efficacious, his Love so endearing: 'tis the worth and excellency of his Person, that gives Authority to all the commands of Faith, and does aw the heart to obedience; and 'tis the worth and excellency of his Person, that is one of the most powerful attractives to draw and allure the hearts of the sons of men to him; if therefore his Person be undervalued, if the dignity and glory of that be not seen, we are never like to enter into a Marriage-Covenant with him: Therefore, soul, if ever thou would'st be Espous'd to this Christ, always

always maintain honorable thoughts of his Perſon: *Behold his glory, as the glory of the onely begotten of the Father*, and beg him more and more to reveal his Perſonal worth, and excellencies to thee.

2. Be ſure always to maintain good thoughts of his ways, Kingdom, and Government: Admit not of one jealouſie of Chriſt, as if he were an hard, ſevere Husband; as if he carried it with rigour and ſeverity towards his ſpouſes: If the Devil and unbelief fail in their other attempts, then they endeavour to prejudice ſouls againſt Chriſt, perſwading them, that he is an hard Maſter, an auſtere Husband, that rules with intolerable rigour and ſeverity: I know, ſayes he in the Goſpel, *that thou waſt an auſtere man*, Mat. 25. 24. And hereby the ſoul is ſcared off from Chriſt: But, ſoul, as ever thou would'ſt be Eſpous'd to him, take heed of any ſuch jealouſie of him, or prejudice againſt him, keeping up good thoughts of him and his ways, him and his government; and be much in contemplating the ſweetneſs both of him and his wayes: Is he ſevere? Pray, where lies his ſeverity? Does he call you to bear his Yoak? He does, but 'tis an eaſie yoak: Does he enjoin you to bear his Burthen? He does, but 'tis a light Burthen: *My yoak is eaſie, and my Burthen is light*, Mat. 11. 29. 30. Does he expect you ſhould take up the Croſſe? He does, but 'tis a ſweet Croſs, a gainful Croſſe, an honorable Croſſe, a

Croſſe that is inlaid with love, and overlaid with Divine ſweetneſs, a Croſs that has a Crown annext to it, even *a Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10. A Croſs that is a Crown here; for 'tis an honour to ſuffer for Chriſt, *Acts* 5. 41. And a Croſs that will greaten and brighten your Crown hereafter, *Mat.* 5. 11, 12. *bleſſed are ye, when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you; for great is your reward in Heaven*: Does he call you to perform ſuch and ſuch ſervices? He does, but withall he gives you ſtrength to perform them, *helping your infirmities by his good Spirit*, Rom. 8. 26. and in caſe you fail, and come ſhort in and of what he calls for, what then? Why then he *pities and ſpares you, as a Father doth his Son that ſerveth him*; he over-looks your failings and defects, *Mal.* 3. 17. Can you do nothing, onely you have a mind to ſerve him? Why then he *accepts of that willing mind according to what you have, and not according to what you have not*, 2 Cor. 8. 12. when you can't pour out a prayer, a ſigh, a groan is accepted by him: Will he have the throne in you, and rule in your ſouls? He will, but his way of rule is moſt ſweet; for he rules with love, and he rewards with life; and he gives a throne for a throne, a throne in glory for a throne in your ſouls: What ſhall I ſay? *his wayes are all wayes of pleaſantneſs, and his pathes are all peace*, Prov. 3. 17. and O what pleaſure, what delight, what ſolace and ſatisfaction of ſoul is there to be found in walking in them? In a word, his whole

whole ſervice is perfect freedom, and there is no true freedom but in his wayes and ſervice: 'Tis a great ſaying which I have read in one of the *Antients*, who (ſayes he) *would not reign? But wouldſt thou reign happily? Serve kind Jeſus, and thou ſhalt reign, becauſe to ſerve him is true reigning.* Thus you ſee, there is no juſt reaſon for hard thoughts of Chriſt in this reſpect, but rather the contrary: Accordingly anſwer, and throw off all thoſe black reproaches, which the devil and unbelief caſt upon this good Lord; and be ſure to maintain good thoughts of him, and his wayes, which will not a little conduce to the promoting of an Eſpouſal between him and thee.

Quis regnare nolit? Vis regnare feliciter? Servi benigno Jeſu, & regnabis, quia illi ſervire regnare eſt. Bern.

5. Would'ſt thou indeed be Eſpouſed to Chriſt? Then ſtudy and contemplate much, how infinitly grateful and acceptable Chriſt is: Sinners know not, or if they know, they conſider not, who, or what Chriſt is; they mind not, how acceptable a good he is to ſouls; and therefore they ſlight him: *Had'ſt thou known*, ſayes Chriſt to the woman, *the gift of God, and who it is that ſpeaketh to thee, thou would have aſkt of him, and he would have given thee living waters*, Jo. 4. 10. Truly did men know Chriſt, and his infinite acceptableneſs, they would run to him, and cloſe with him in a Marriage-Covenant: Study therefore and contemplate this much, thereby poſſeſſing thy ſoul with a deep ſenſe of it. The Apoſtle ſpeaking but

of one truth concerning Christ, tells us 'tis *worthy of all acceptation*, 1 Tim. 1. 16. And if so, what acceptation must Christ himself, yea Christ, with all his truths, and all his treasures both, be worthy of? And how should our souls cleave to him, & take him into our embraces? There are among others five things which speak a good to be eminently grateful and acceptable: worth and excellency: usefulness and serviceableness: suitableness and convenience: Sweetness and delight: Durableness and unchangableness in all; all which are found in Christ, who tenders himself and his Love to us.

1. There is worth and excellency in Christ, yea, incomparable worth and excellency: The Apostle speaks of an excelling excellency that there is in the knowledge of Christ, *Phil.* 3. 8. Now the knowledge of Christ is so excellent, because Christ is excellent: Christ indeed is all worth, all excellency: He is an infinite Ocean of Beauty and glory; *he is the chefest among ten Thousand, and altogether lovely.* Cant. 5. 10 16. All excellencies dwell in him, as in their proper Fountain, and they all meet, and are united in him, as lines in their proper center: Some beauty, some excellencies you find scatter'd up and down among the creatures; the Saints, and Angels, the Sun, Moon, and Starrs, and the like: But alas! Tis scatter'd, and 'tis scatter'd but here and there a drop; but in Christ you have all Beauty, all worth,

worth, all excellency in a bleſſed Union and conjunction: You have all in one, and that unchangeably. O what a portion is Chriſt (ſayes one) O that the Saints would dig deeper into the treaſures of his wiſdom and excellencies: Truly 'tis ſweet digging there, and there, in ſome ſort, there will be room for digging to all eternity; for even through eternity new wonders of glory will ariſe, new Beauties and excellencies will appear, and ſhine forth in Chriſt: What ſhall I ſay? He has in him all the excellencies of both worlds; and is indeed deſervedly the wonder of both: In him there is a confluence of all the lovely properties, the drawing attributes, the raviſhing Beauties, the Bright-ſhining and glorious perfections of the infinitely bleſſed Deity: Hence, ſayes he, *all that the Father hath is mine*; which may be underſtood of his Divine perfections, *Joh.* 16.15. Hence alſo he is ſaid to be *equal with God*, *Phil.* 2. 6. i e. *Look, whatever Divine perfections there are in God the Father, they all are found in Chriſt: in him is expreſt the whole Perſon of the Father, the whole Eſſence, Being, and beauty of the Father:* And (as a Learned man has obſerved) *Chriſt the Son is in all things like the Father, this only excepted, that he is not the perſon of the Father*: Hence alſo he is ſaid to be *the brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and*

Quicquid perfectionis in patre erat & eſt totum illud eſt in filio, in eo, tota patris perſona, tota ουσια tota ουσις, tota etiam facies expreſſa eſt, Zanch. in Loc.

Filius per omnia ſimilis eſt patri, hoc excepto, quod non eſt ipſa patris Perſona. Davenant.

the

the expreſs image of his Perſon, Heb. 1. 3. All the Fathers glories and excellencies do ſhine forth in him, and he perfectly repreſents the Father to us: Thus Chriſt is a perſon of excellency; and ſo, moſt acceptable: And O who would not accept and embrace ſuch a Chriſt? And how great a wickedneſs is it to reject him? I can't but here take up the complaint of an holy man: O pity, pity for evermore (ſayes he) that there ſhould be ſuch an one, as Chriſt Jeſus, ſo boundleſs, ſo bottomleſs, ſo incomparable, ſo infinite in excellency and ſweetneſs, and ſo few that will take him: they miſerably loſe their love (ſayes he) who will not beſtow it upon this lovely one.

2. There is uſefulneſs and ſerviceableneſs in Chriſt: As Chriſt is a perſon of the higheſt excellency, ſo of the greateſt and moſt abſolute need, uſe, and ſervice to poor ſouls: Indeed he is *the one needful good*, Lu. 10. 42. Chriſt is ſo much needed by, and of ſo much uſe and ſervice to poor ſouls, that they can't poſſibly do well, and be happy without him: Pray, conſider, we provoke God, and he is angry with us; and by Chriſt alone 'tis, that we *receive the attonement*. Rom. 5. 11. We ſin, and load our ſelves with guilt; and by Chriſt alone 'tis, that we are or can be diſcharged from it: *In him have we redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins*, Eph. 1. 7. We have an hard and impenitent heart, an heart that cannot repent; and

and by Chriſt, and Chriſt alone 'tis, that we can obtain repentance, *he being exalted to give repentance unto Iſrael, as well as remiſſion of ſins*, Act. 5. 31. We are at a dreadful diſtance from God, *a far off* (as the Scripture ſpeaks) and by Chriſt and him alone 'tis, that *we are made nigh*: What ſhall I ſay? The beſt of Saints, as well as the worſt of Sinners, have an abſolute need of Chriſt, and he is of daily uſe and ſervice to them; neither can they live one day or one hour without him: Indeed he is their life, and without him therefore they are dead and undone, as well as others: *without him they can do nothing*, Jo. 15. 5. Without him every duty will be too hard, every burthen will be too heavy, every temptation will be too ſtrong, every luſt will be too mighty for them: without him they would yet fall ſhort of the eternal reſt, and would make ſhip-wrack of Faith, ſouls, and all for ever. Without him neither Saints, nor Sinners can have any acceſs to God, any intercourſe or communion with him, in which notwithſtanding the whole of our happineſs both in time and eternity lies. *I am the way* (ſays he) *and no man cometh to the Father, but by me*, Jo. 14. 6. *And through him*, ſays the *Apoſtle, we have acceſs unto the Father by one Spirit*, Eph. 2. 18. Without him we could have no peace with God; *for he alone is our peace*, Eph. 2. 14. And having peace with God, without him we could not maintain our peace one hour, it being he alone that

is

is *our advocate and propitiation with the Father*, 1 Jo. 2. 1, 2. Thus he is every way most needful, and most useful to eternal souls: O how grateful, how acceptable then is he; or ought he to be to us?

3 There is suitableness and conveniency also in Christ to the souls of men: The suitableness and conveniency of any good renders it acceptable to us: How acceptable is bread to an hungry man, because a good suitable to him? How acceptable is drink to a thirsty man, because a good suitable to him? Now there is an admirable suitableness and conveniency in Christ to the souls of men, and that in all the cases of them: Why then should he not be acceptable to them? One (I remember) represents the suitableness of Christ to the souls and wants of Sinners thus, the whole person, nature, and offices of Christ (sayes he) are so suited and proportioned to all the varity of needs in us, that they are as a key for a lock, there is ward for ward, every thing done in the key suitable to the lock: and indeed so 'tis here, Christ and his fulness being exactly suited to us and our wants: We are sick, and sick to death, and Christ is a Physitian, *Mat.* 9. 12. And what more suitable to the sick then a Physitian? We are sinful, and sinful to damnation, we are lost Sinners, and Christ is a Saviour; and who or what more suitable to lost Sinners then a Saviour? We are poor captives,

tives, the captives of ſin and Sathan, in bondage to death and the curſe; and Chriſt is a Redeemer; and who or what more ſutable to Captives then a Redeemer? Weare under the Tyranny and Uſurpation of many mighty, powerful Luſts, Luſts that are impoſing upon us every hour, and we are no way able to deal with them: But Chriſt is a great and puiſſant King, who can ſubdue all, and whoſe Arrows ſhall be ſharp in the hearts of all his and our Enemies; and what more ſutable to Perſons in ſuch a circumſtance then ſuch a King? We are dead, and Chriſt is Life; and what more ſutable for the Dead then Life? We are poor, and miſerable; and Chriſt is gold to enrich us. Are we naked? Chriſt is Cloathing for us: Are we blind? He is Eye-ſalve for us: Are we in Priſon? He is Liberty: Are we Hungry? He is Bread: Are we Thirſty? He is the Water of Life, which thoſe that drink of ſhall never thirſt: Are we troubled? He is Reſt: Are we drooping and deſponding? He is the conſolation of *Iſrael*: Are we bewilder'd? He is a Guide: Are we born down in our ſpiritual conflicts? He is the Captain of our Salvation, who will fight for us: O how ſutable every way is Chriſt to ſouls, and being ſo ſutable, why ſhould he not be acceptable to us? Poor ſinner, is there any in Heaven or Earth that will ſo ſuit and anſwer the various wants and caſes of thy ſoul, as

Chriſt

Christ does and will? Why then shouldst thou not account him worthy of all acceptation?

4. There is sweetness and delight in Christ: *Trahit sua quemq; voluptas* (says the Poet) every one is drawn and allur'd by pleasure and delight: What is it that makes sin, that cursed thing sin pleasing and grateful to so many? Surely one great thing is that pleasure and delight which they find, at least promise themselves to find, in it: and indeed generally the more sweet and delightful things are, the more readily and greedily they are embraced by the Sons of Men: Why then should not Christ be grateful and acceptable to us? Is there any so sweet, so pleasant, so delightful, as he? He is a Fountain of sweetness, as well as Excellency: I find him so sweet (sayes an holy Man speaking of Christ) that my Love, suppose I would charge it to remove from him, it would not obey me. How sweet is his Love? *Thy Love is better than Wine*, sayes the Spouse, *Cant.* 1. 2. *This is that best Wine which goeth down sweetly, causing the Lips of those that are asleep to speak*, Cant. 7. 9. Yea, this is that will cause a dead Man to speak and Live, as an holy Man speaks concerning it. Experienced Souls will tell you, that there is more sweetness in one descent of Love from Christ, then in all the delights of sin and the Creature: This is that which

which sweetens the sharpest affliction; yea, this is that, and that alone, which sweetens Death it self, and enables the soul truly to triumph over it, *Rom.* 8. *latter end.* O the sweet bathing that there is in the Fountain of Christ's Love! How sweet are his Fruits? *I sat down under his shadow*, sayes the Spouse, *with great delight, and his Fruits were sweet to my taste*, Cant. 2. 3. By Fruits I understand the purchases of his Blood, and the effects of his Love, Peace, Pardon, Righteousness, Justification, Sanctification, and Holiness, Acceptation with God, and the like: And O how sweet are these? How pleasant are these? With what solace and satisfaction may a believing soul feed and feast himself upon these? How sweet is his presence, entercourse, and communion with him? This made the Spouse to be *glad, and rejoyce in him*, Cant. 1. 4. This indeed sets the soul down at the very Gate of Heaven, where he sayes, 'tis good to be here: 'Tis a blessed exclamation which I find one of the Ancients breaks out into. *O how good, and how sweet, O how good, and how pleasant is it, to dwell with thee; most sweet Jesus, to converse with thee, to reveal the concerns of our souls to thee, and to enjoy thy consolations!* And again elsewhere, *O thou most sweet*

O quam bonum & quam jucundum! O quam bonum & jucundum est, tecum dulcissime Jesu habitare in unum, tecum colloqui, tibi revelare causam animæ nostræ, tuæq; consolationis responso perfrui! Bern. de pass. domi.

sweet and most loving Jesus, how sweet is it to think of thee! for while we are speaking and thinking of thee, thou art sweetly present with us, and our souls are fill'd with delight in the odours of thine Ointments: And yet once more, *O Lord, when at any time I partake in this joy* (speaking of the joy of Communion with him) *I cry out, Lord, 'tis good to be here, let us build three Tabernacles here, one for Faith, one for Hope, one for Love.* And indeed who is there that knows what Communion with Christ means, that does not find an incomparable sweetness, solace, and satisfaction in it? This is that which fills some with joy unspeakable and full of glory, even here; and this is that which will be the joy and delight of Heaven for ever: Every way Christ is a very Field of pleasure, a very Paradice of Joys, and a very Fountain of delights: O why, why then should he not be more grateful and acceptable to us?

O dulcissime & amantissime Jesu, quam jucundum cogitare, quam salubre, loqui de te, tu enim de te loquentibus presens mentem dulciter accendis, &c. Id. Ib.

O Domine, si quando me in aliqua hujus gaudii parte invenio, clamo Domine bonum est nos hic esse. faciamus hic tria tabernacula, fidei unum, spei unum, amori unum. Bern. *de amore dei.*

5. There is durableness and unchangeableness in Christ; which being added to all the former, renders him even infinitely the more grateful and acceptable: Possibly some worth, some usefulness, some suitableness, some sweetness and delight there may

may be found in the Creature, and Creature Enjoyments; but alas! this allayes the acceptableness of all, that 'tis all fading, dying, and changing: and indeed whatever is short, and but for a season, can't challenge any great acceptation: But now Christ he is lasting, durable, and unchangable; *He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13. 8. What he was, he is; and what he is, he alwayes will be: He was most excellent, most useful, most suitable, most sweet and delightful to Souls; and so he is, and alwayes will be: *He* (as one of the Ancients speaks of him) *is immutable, he changes all things, but is himself unchangable, never new, never old.* Hence also Christ himself tells us, That *he is the Alpha and Omega, he that was, and is, and is to come*, Rev. 1. 8. He is ever the same in love, in beauty, in fulness, in faithfulness, and in all his desirablenesses: And O how grateful and acceptable does this render him! All our enjoyments here below fade and change; yea, we our selves change; *Changes and War are upon us*, as *Job* speaks; yea, some of us are daily waiting for our last and great change: But O! blessed be God, Christ fades not; Christ changes not: What he was to, and what he has done for Souls formerly, that he is to, and that he can do for Souls now; yea, and that he will be to, and will be able to do for Souls hereafter:

Hoc est, semper sui similis, invariabilis, immutabilis, abaeterno in aeternum. Glass. Rhet. Sac.

Deus est immutabilis mutans omnia, nunquam novum nunquam vetus. Aug.

For he is still to come, as he was, and is, so he is to come, which is a sweet word. Poor Soul, hitherto, it may be, thou hast gone along through thy work and warfare with some comfort and courage; but that which damps and terrifies thee, is the apprehension of what may be to come. O, sayest thou, the Tryals that are to come, the Difficulties that are to come, the Temptations that are to come, the Storms and Tempests that are to come! Well, Soul, for thy encouragement under all, know, that whatever is to come, Christ is to come too: Are there Tryals to come? Christ is to come too: Are there Difficulties and Temptations to come? Christ is to come too: Are there Storms and Tempests to come? Christ is to come too: And while Christ is to come, fear not, only close with him in a Marriage-Covenant, and make him thine; then come what will come, come what can come, all will be well. Thus Christ is every way acceptable, and infinitely acceptable; and as ever, Soul, thou wouldst be indeed espoused to him, dwell much in the study and contemplation of his acceptableness: Labour to be possest with a deep and daily renewed sense of it, which will sweetly draw and allure thy Soul to him.

VI. Wouldst thou indeed be espoused to Christ? then be sure that thou pitchest thy Faith aright upon him, and closest in effectually with him in a way of believing: 'Tis Faith that is both the great uniting, and the great

great interesting Grace; it unites us to Christ, and interests us in Christ. 'Tis that, as has been formerly declared and evinced, that puts Christ and the Soul into the bosom and embraces of each others love, and by which the Marriage-Knot is tyed between them. If ever therefore thou wouldst be indeed espoused unto him, look well to thy Faith, see that thou dost pitch that aright upon him, closing with him, and embracing of him; not by halves, but throughly; not feignedly, but intimately and cordially. But here some may say, How may we do to pitch our Faith aright upon Christ, so as to get conjugal Union and Communion with him? Three things must be done in order hereunto, which I desire you to look well to.

I. See that you wholly quit and renounce your selves.

II. Labour to get a right notion and apprehension of Christ.

III. Be sure to make a right choice of him, being so apprehended.

I. Would you pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, and be indeed espoused to him? Then see that you wholly quit and renounce your selves. Self and believing are at the utmost distance from, and enmity with each other that is imaginable; they are irreconcilably oppolit each to other; and where Faith takes place, there Self vanishes and dies away, and that in all its notions, and with all its

accomplishments: Hence, saves Christ, *If any man will come after me*, believe on me, be espoused to me, *let him deny himself*, Mat. 16. 24. *Let him deny himself*, renounce himself, go out of himself, let Self become nothing with him: And indeed, the Soul that believes in Christ, does go quite out of himself, he sees and feels himself to be a poor empty Nothing in all respects, he sees and finds his Strength to be Weakness, his Wisdom Folly, his Beauty Blackness, his Righteousness Sin, his All Nothing: And thus must we, if ever we indeed believe and get Union with Christ. O, my Beloved, one of the great things which stands between Faith and us, Christ and us, is Self: This indeed is the Souls Darling, the first Born (as one calls it) of his Love and Delights, and he is loth to part with it; but part with it he must, and renounce it he must, or he can never believe aright, nor is he ever like to have any part or lot in Christ: Every step out of Self is a step towards Christ, and Faith in Christ; and we must be divorced from the one, if ever we be married to the other: particularly you must quit and renounce Self, especially in this three-fold Notion; Self-Will, Self-Worth, Self-Interest.

1. You must quit and renounce Self-Will: He that indeed believes, must in a sort have no Will of his own, but his Will must be wholly melted and resigned up into the Will of Christ: Hence the *Church* is said to be *Subjecta uno Christi*, Ephes. 5. 24. We are apt

to

to live in our own Wills, and are exceeding fond of, and set upon having our Wills, and that how cross and contrary soever they be to the Will of Christ: But if ever we believe so as to get union with Christ, our stubborn Wills must bow, our proud Wills must down, and must in all things, as much as is possible, be refer'd and resign'd into Christ's Will: and good reason, for his Will is the rule of goodness, as well as the first cause of all things: We must not think to say, we are Lords, but we must bow to Christ as the great and only Lord.

2. You must quit and renounce Self-Worth, Self-Righteousness; you must renounce all Worth and Righteousness of your own in point of justification and acceptation with God. 'Tis a great word which I shall speak, Mens duties, living under the Gospel, keep almost as many from Christ and believing, as their sins do: My meaning is, as the love of sin keeps some, so confidence in Duties, a confidence in Self-Worth, Self-Righteousness, keeps multitudes of others from Christ and believing: And the truth is, my Beloved, this piece of Self is the great Idol of the Soul, and that which men are marvellously loth to quit and renounce; and indeed 'tis oftentimes so painted, and, as it were, spiritualliz'd, acted with so much state, and set out with so many ornaments, that it would make any one in love with it: but yet this Idol, so dear as 'tis to the Soul, must be denyed and renounced, this Darling

must be cast off, and that with loathing and abomination in respect of Soul-saving, if ever you believe, and are united to Christ: And the Soul that indeed does believe, looks upon himself to be the poorest, despicablest, and undonest Creature in the World notwithstanding all; he throws away not only his Rags, but his Robes too, all his Priviledges, all his Performances, all his moral Excellencies and Attainments, as to a dependance upon them for Life and Salvation; as you know *Paul* did *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. of which more hereafter. The Soul's language in the Work of believing is such as this; I am a poor, vile, empty nothing in my self; I am nothing, I can do nothing, and I deserve nothing; I am nothing but sin, I can do nothing but offend and provoke God, and I deserve nothing but frowns and death from him: If ever I be saved, 'tis Free Grace must save me; if ever I find favour in Gods sight, it must be purely from Grace in Christ: Alas! I have walked contrary to God all my dayes; my heart and life both have been full of enmity and provocation against him, and my very Duties are damning, *my best Righteousnes being as filthy Rags*, Isa. 64. 6. And indeed, till it comes to this with us, we are like to remain strangers to Christ, and Faith in Christ. I shall only say this further as to this particular, That no men in the World are further off from Christ, and union with him through believing, then such as trust in their own Worth, their own Righteousnes;

tuisnes: Christ himself tells us, That *Publicans and Harlots do enter the Kingdom of Heaven before such*, Mat. 21. 31.

3. You must quit and renounce Self-Interest; that is to say, you must be at a parting point with all, you must be willing to forgo all your outward interests and concerns for Christ, when he calls you to it, thinking nothing too much or too good for him: this Christ is expres in, *Matth.* 10. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me*: *And he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* And again, *Luke* 14. 33. *Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.* In a word, the meaning is not, that all that come to Christ must actually forsake all those things, and deny themselves as to the enjoyment of them; but the meaning is, (first) that we must have a very diminutive love for these in comparison of Christ. And (secondly) that we must be at a parting point with all for Christ's sake, and at Christ's call. And truly, 'tis but reason we should be so; he that actually parted with so much for us, does highly deserve that we should be in a readiness to part with our little All for him: Thus we must wholly quit and renounce our selves, if we would indeed believe and have union with Christ.

II. Would you pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, and be indeed espoused to him? then labour to get a right notion and apprehension

henſion of him, as the great object of Faith. One great reaſon why many fail and miſcarry in their Faith, and ſo fall ſhort of Chriſt, is their ignorance of him; they have not a right notion and apprehenſion of Chriſt, as the great object of Faith; and indeed, unleſs Chriſt be rightly known and apprehended by us, we are never like to pitch our Faith aright upon him: *How ſhall they believe* (ſayes the Apoſtle) *in him, of whom they have not heard?* Rom. 10. 14. *How ſhall they believe? i. e.* Men cannot believe aright on one that has not been reveal'd and made known to them: a blind, ignorant Faith, is never like to reach union and communion with Chriſt; and, my Beloved, if we would believe aright on Chriſt, we muſt know him aright, and apprehend him aright. Faith, in Scripture, is ſometimes expreſt by knowledge, *John* 17. 3. Not that knowledge alone is all that is requiſite to Faith; but it notes thus much to us, that the knowledge of Chriſt is ſuch a requiſite to believing, that there can be no true believing without it: Hence alſo Chriſt ſpeaks of *ſeeing the Son, and believing on him*; ſeeing before believing, and ſeeing in order to believing: *This is the will of him that ſent me, That* * *whoſoever ſeeth the Son and believeth on him, ſhould*

Dei cognitio eadem eſt cum Fide, quâ inſiti in Chriſti Corpus, divina adoptionis conſortes, & Cœlorum hæredes efficimur. Calv. in loc.

* *Quiſquis videt Filium & credit in eum. Hæc verba oſtendunt fidem ex Chriſti notitia fluere, non quod præter ſimplex Dei Verbum quicquam deſideret: ſed quia ſi Chriſto fidamus, qualis ſit & quid nobis offerat, ſentire nos oportet.* Calv.

have

have everlasting life, John 6. 40. By *seeing the Son*, here we are to understand the true Knowledge of Christ: Hence also they that come to Christ, and believe savingly on him, are said, in order thereunto, *to be taught of God, and to have heard, and learn't of the Father*, John 6. 45. And, pray, what have they been *taught* of God? what have they *learn't* of him, but the knowledge of Christ, as the great object of Faith? at least this is one great lesson, which all that believe do and must learn. As ever therefore you would pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, labour to know and apprehend him aright; labour to know and apprehend him as he is revealed and offered in the Gospel. Particularly,

1. View and apprehend him in his God-head and Divine Nature: The Gospel reveals him in his Divinity, it propounds him to our Faith, as God, *the true God, the great God, the mighty God, God over all*; and thus should Faith eye and apprehend him: Thus *Thomas* his Faith apprehended him, when he said, *My Lord, and my God*, John 20. 28. And indeed nothing but a God-head, an infinite, eternal, unchangable God-head is a Foundation strong enough for Faith to build upon.

Facetur Thomas Christum esse Dominum suum; deinde altius conscendit, ac Deum quoque nominat; fides ejus evehitur ad aeternam Christi divinitatem. Calv. in loc.

2. View and apprehend him in his Personal-Relation; not only as God, but also as God the Son, and so as distinguish't from the Father; Thus the Gospel reveals and propounds

pounds him to our Faith, and thus alſo ſhould our Faith view and apprehend him: Thus *Peter*'s Faith, with the reſt in whoſe name he ſpake, did eye and apprehend him, John 6. 69. *We believe, and are ſure* (ſaid he) *that thou art that Chriſt, the Son of the living God*: There is a diſtinct honour due to every Perſon in the Sacred Trinity; and the more diſtinctly our Faith eyes and apprehends Chriſt in his Perſonal Relation as Son, the more compleat it is, and the more it gives him the honour of that Relation.

3. View and apprehend him in his Humanity, or as the Son of God incarnate: The Goſpel reveals and propounds Chriſt as the object of Faith, to us, not ſimply as God, and as God the Son, but as God the Son incarnate, as *the Word made Fleſh*, John 1. 14, or as *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. As having taken humane nature into perſonal union with himſelf, and ſo is both God and Man in one perſon; and thus alſo ſhould Faith eye and apprehend him: *You believe in God*, ſayes he, *believe alſo in me*, Joh. 1. 14. Hence alſo he ſpeaks ſo often of *eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood*, and of *giving his Fleſh for the life of the World*; and withall tells us, that his *Fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed*, Joh. 6. 51, 53, 54, 55, 56. By all which he ſignifies to us, that our Faith muſt reſpect and apprehend him as Man, as well as God; as

Tunc vitam in Chriſto invenies, ſi vitæ materiam quæras in ejus carne. Nam ſicut æternum Dei Verbo fons vitæ eſt, ita caro ejus veluti canalis, vitam, quæ intrinſeca (ut loquuntur) in Divinitate reſidet, ad nos diffundit. Calv.

as the Son incarnate; and indeed thus he is the next and most immediate object of Faith: The God-head or Divinity is the ultimate object of Faith; but Christ, the Son incarnate, is the next and most immediate object of Faith: Hence we are said *by him to believe in God*, 1 Pet. 1. 21.

* Faith first eyes Christ as Man, or the Son incarnate, and by him comes ultimately to object it self upon God: The humanity is *janua ad Divinitatem*, (as one speaks of it) *a Gate to the Divinity*, that by which our Faith passes to the God-head: *And* (as a great Divine speaks) *he that comes not to Christ as man, shall never come to him as God*: The truth is, Faith cannot deal with God immediately, but as God cloath'd with our nature.

* *A Christo homine nos deducimur ad Christum Deum.*

Neque ad Christum Deum unquam pervenit, qui hominem neglexit.

4. View and apprehend him in his office of Mediatorship: The Gospel reveals and propounds Christ to our Faith in his Office, it propounds and reveals him as Christ, as the true Messiah and Saviour of the World, as one seal'd, sent, and anointed by the Father for the redemption of lost Souls; and thus also should Faith eye and apprehend him: So also did *Peter*'s Faith apprehend him: *Thou art Christ* (sayes he) *the Son of the living God*, Mat. 16. 16. Hence we read of *believing that Jesus is the Christ*, 1 John 5. 1. Hence also Christ tells the Jews, *If ye believe not, that I am he, ye shall die in*

your

your sins, John 8. 24. *If ye believe not, that I am he*, i. e. that I am the Messiah, the Christ, the Saviour that was promised. O! Faith is short of that notion it should have of Christ, unless it thus eyes him in his Office.

5. View and apprehend him in his infinite ability and sufficiency for the discharge of his Office: The Gospel reveals and propounds him to our Faith, as one *able to save to the very uttermost*; and accordingly should our Faith eye and apprehend him, *Heb.* 7. 25. It reveals him indeed both as an onely and allsufficient Saviour: as an onely Saviour; *Look unto me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none besides me*, Isa. 45. 22. *Neither is there Salvation in any other; nor is there any other Name given under Heaven, whereby we may be saved, but his only*, Acts 4. 12. And as an allsufficient Saviour; *My Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed*, (sayes he) *and he that eateth me, even he shall live by me*, John 6. 55, 57. It reveals him in the infinite vertue of his Blood, the inexhaustible fulness of his Grace, the compleatness of his Obedience, the excellency of his Righteousness, the perfection of his Satisfaction, and the like; and thus should our Faith eye and apprehend him. O labour for such a notion and apprehension of Christ as this is: as ever you would believe aright, and be indeed espoused to Christ, labour for a sound, clear, distinct knowledge of him, as the great object of Faith: Pray much for a

Spirit

Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of him; that was the Apostles prayer for the *Ephesians* in this case, *Ephes.* 1. 17. and let it be yours for your selves.

III. Would you pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, and be indeed espoused to him? Then be sure to make a right choice or election of him, being thus known and apprehended. To have a right notion and apprehension of Christ, is good and necessary, in order to union with him by believing; but 'tis not enough; no, Christ being known and apprehended, must also be chosen and embraced by us, and that as he is revealed and offered in the Gospel. To know and apprehend Christ, is an act of the Mind or Understanding; but to chuse and embrace Christ, is an act of the Will and Affections; and though Faith has its rise and inchoation in the mind, yet its complement and perfection it has in the Will and Affections; these liking, chusing, and embracing of him, and that in a way suitable to what the mind sees and apprehends concerning him; and this must be added to the former, or there is no right believing, and so no conjugal union and communion with Christ: Hence that of the Apostle, *With the heart Man believeth unto Righteousness*, Rom. 10. 10. True believing then is with the Heart; now by the Heart here, as also generally elsewhere

Observemus, fidei sedem non in cerebro esse, sed in corde; & quoniam cordis nomen pro sensu et sinctero affectu sæpe capitur; dicta firmam esse & efficacem fidem, non nudam tantum notionem. Calv.

where in Scripture, is meant the Will and Affections; accordingly to believe with the Heart, is for the Will and Affections to chuse and embrace Christ, as he is revealed and offered in the Gospel; this is called *a receiving of Christ*, John 1. 12. We receive Christ into our Wills, when we chuse him, and adhere to him for Life and Salvation; and we receive him into our affections, when we love him, desire him, and delight in him; and this is believing: *To believe*, sayes Calvin, *is nothing else but to chuse and embrace Christ with a sincere affection of mind, as he is reveal'd and offer'd in the Gospel*: And this indeed is the great vital act of Faith, and that whereby our Conjugal Union and Communion with Christ is more especially brought about: This is that which makes Christ ours, and puts us into the possession of him: *Mary*, sayes Christ, *hath chosen the better part, which shall never be taken from her*, Luke 10. 42. She had chosen Christ, and her choice of him had made him her own, and so her own, as that she could never lose him, never be deprived of him: Indeed a right choice of Christ makes him ours, it unites us to him, and interests us in him for ever. A little further to help you in this business, know that a right choice of Christ is accomplish'd by these three steps.

1. The Soul apprehending Christ (as before) likes him, and approves of him, as the best and most suitable Saviour, the most lovely and desirable object in Heaven or Earth;

Earth: The Soul sayes of Christ, as they did of the Land of *Canaan*, Numb. 14. 7. *The Land* (say they) *is an exceeding good Land:* So this Christ, sayes the Soul, is an exceeding good Christ, this Saviour is an exceeding good Saviour; there's none like him, there's no beauty like his Beauty, no blood like his Blood, no fulness like his Fulness, no love like his Love.

2. The Soul desires him, and longs after him, and that with a strong, ardent, and vigorous affection: This is call'd *hungring and thirsting after Christ*, Matth. 5. 6. The Soul seeing Christ, and approving of him, longingly cries out; O a Christ, a Christ! O that this good Christ were mine!

3. The Soul is by Grace (weetly and powerfully determined upon Christ; so as actually to make a solemn and deliberate choice of him, singling him out from all other things in Heaven and Earth, as the best and most desirable good, and most worthy of his dearest and most intimate embraces: The Soul now pitches his choice upon Christ to be his Head and Husband, his Lord, and Saviour, his rest, his treasure, his happiness, his all for ever. Now by these steps, see that you come up to make a right choice of Christ; be sure that you like him, and approve of him, as the best and most desirable object in Heaven or Earth: Truly if you view him aright, you can't but like him, and approve of him as such; See that the desire of your Souls be indeed towards him above

all

all others: View him, till you fall in love with him, yea, till you fall sick of love for him; and be sure not to rest, till you get your Wills sweetly and powerfully determined upon him, so determined upon him, as to make a free, solemn, deliberate choice of him, passing by all other Lovers, and taking him alone into the bosom and embraces of your Faith and Love. Now that you may be sure to make a right choice of Christ, such a choice of Christ as may make him yours; and tie the Marriage-Knot between him and you, observe herein these five or six great Rules.

1. Be sure that you chuse and embrace Christ himself, and not somewhat else instead of him. 'Tis a great and awakening saying which a worthy Divine has; *Many now*, sayes he, *take Christ by guess; but be sure that it be he, and onely he whom ye embrace: his sweet Smell, his lovely Voice, his fair Face, his gracious working in the Soul will soon tell if it be he or no.* So say I, be sure that it be he; many mistake the Object, they close with somewhat else instead of Christ; at best, they chuse Christ's Portion, his Benefits, his Priviledges, his Purchases; but not his Person: But my advice to you is, pitch on nothing short of the Person of Christ; then is our Faith beyond all doubt rightly pitch't upon Christ, when Christ himself, not his Benefits and Priviledges onely, are chosen and embraced by us. A Marriage, if right, is between Person and Person, not

not between Person and Portion, Person and Estate, that being a resulting thing: So here in this Spiritual-Marriage, Faith does not marry the Soul to the Portion, Benefits, and Priviledges of Christ, but to Christ himself. True, I don't say (first) but that true Faith gives the Soul an interest in all the Benefits, Priviledges, and Purchases of Christ: Nor (secondly) do I say, that the Soul may not have an eye to these, and a respect to these in his choice of, and close with Christ; yea, usually these are the first thing that Faith has in its eye: The first thing the Soul looks at, and is taken with, when he is drawn to Christ, usually is that Peace, that Pardon, that Righteousness, that deliverance from Sin, Death, and Hell, which he sees is found and treasured up in Christ for Souls: But though these things be so, yet the Soul does, and must go higher, he must look at, and pitch upon the Person of Christ, or his Faith is not so right and compleat as it ought to be. Alas! 'tis the Person of Christ that is the great Fountain of all Grace, and all Manifestations from God to us; and Faith accordingly does close in with his Person: The Spouses Faith seems so to do, *Cant.* 5. 10. She had her eye upon the personal Beauty and Glory of Christ, and accordingly embraced him with her Faith and Love: Hence also you have so often those expressions; *I sought him whom my Soul loved; and saw you him whom my Soul loveth?* Her love, and so her Faith was fixt upon Christ himself; and

thus do you fix your Faith and Love upon him; so shall you be sure not to miss of a Conjugal-Union and Communion with him.

2. Be sure that you chuse a whole Christ, and not a part of him only: My meaning is, see that you chuse and embrace Christ in all his Offices, as a King as well as a Priest, as a Lord as well as a Saviour; and as in all his Offices, so for all those ends and uses for which God has designed him, and the Gospel revealed him to us; for Holiness, as well as Righteousness; for Sanctification, as well as Justification. I need not tell you, that Christ is a Lord and King as well as a Saviour, and that as such he is revealed and offered in the Gospel to our Faith: *Him hath God exalted a Prince and Saviour to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins*, Acts 5.31. and they that will have him, as a Saviour to give them pardon, must have him as a Prince to give them repentance; And you know Christ's Rest and his Yoke go together in the Gospel-Offer, *Mat.* 11.28,29. Nor need I tell you, that God has appointed him, and the Gospel reveals him to be our Sanctification as well as our Justification: So you have it expressly, 1 *Cor.* 1.30. Accordingly, then do we chuse Christ, and embrace him aright, when we chuse and embrace him under each notion; when we chuse and embrace him not as a Saviour only, but as a Lord too; not onely as a Priest to procure pardon and reconciliation for us, but also as a Prince, to rule, govern, and command us;

us; not only as our Righteousness to justifie us, but as a Fountain of Grace to make us holy; and thus true Faith does chuse and embrace him, *Isa.* 45. 24. *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength:* Mark, Faith chuses Christ not only for Righteousness, but for Strength too, Righteousness for Justification, Strength for Holiness and Sanctification. Christ's language to the Soul, in the tender of himself, is such as this; Poor Soul, thou art in a dead, lost, undone condition, God is wroth with thee, Hell gapes for thee, Justice calls aloud for vengeance against thee; and there is no hope, no help, no salvation for thee, but in and by me, and union with me: And loe! I am willing to bestow my self, with all my fulness upon thee: But remember this, that I'le rule and command thee: If I be thy Saviour, I'le be thy Lord and King too: If thou wilt share in my Redemption, thou must be content to bear my Yoke, to bow to my Scepter, to submit to my Laws and Kingdom: Accordingly, Faith's answer, if right, is this; Content, Lord, 'tis but fit, that he that Saves should rule and reign, that he that Redeems should be bowed and submitted to; and I do willingly give up my self to thy holy and spiritual Government, thy Yoke is easie, thy Scepter is Righteous, thy Kingdom is full of Peace and Joy, and I desire to come under them: I would have thee to make me holy, as well as righteous; to subdue this rebellious heart of mine, and to rule

in me by thy pure Spirit, as well as to save me by thy perfect obedience: O see, that thus you chuse and embrace whole Christ, else your Faith is not right, nor are you like to attain unto a Conjugal-Union and Communion with him.

3. Be sure that you chuse Christ singly and alone, and not joyn somewhat else with him: Some are for compounding with Christ, they would joyn somewhat else in Partnership with him; but as Christ must not be divided, so neither will he be compounded, he will be all, or nothing at all to Souls; and so true Faith closes with him: Hence *with the new Creature Christ* is said to be *all, and in all*, Col. 3. 11. The *Patriarchs* (as one observes) had many of them a Wife and a Concubine, but it is not so here; no, as Faith chuses a whole Christ, so it chuses a naked Christ, Christ singly and alone, without joyning any thing else in Partnership with him: It matches the Soul to Christ with an absolute exclusion of all other Matches: Indeed Faith sees enough in a single Christ, a naked Christ, without the help of any thing else, and accordingly chuses and embraces him: And so must your Faith chuse and embrace him, or you are like to miss of Conjugal-Union and Communion with him: You must chuse him singly and alone, joyning nothing with him, and that especially in the great business of Righteousness and Acceptation with God: Some would fain compound with Christ in this business; they

they would have Christ, but they would have their own Duties too; they would have his Righteousness, but they would have their own Righteousness too; they would have theirs bear a share with his in the point of Righteousness and Justification before God. Thus 'twas with the Jews of old, *Rom.* 9. 31, 32. with *Ch.* 10. *beg.* 'Tis said, *They followed after the Law of Righteousness, but attained not to the Law of Righteousness:* And why? *Because*, sayes the Apostle, *they sought it not by Faith, but, as it were, by the Works of the Law:* and Chap. 10. 3. *They went about*, 'tis said, *to establish their own Righteousness, and submitted not themselves to the Righteousness of God.* Pray observe, (first) they were addicted to, and look't for Salvation by their own Righteousness. (Secondly), Though they were addicted to their own Righteousness, and would fain live by it, yet they seemed not to cleave wholly to that, but would have Christ's and theirs joyned together; therefore 'tis said, *They sought it not by Faith, but, as it were, by the Works of the Law, i. e.* They were neither wholly for Christ, nor wholly for Self, but partly for the one, and partly for the other, joyning Self with Christ. And (thirdly) this left them short of Rightcousness, Life, Salvation, and all: For 'tis said, that upon this account *they attained not unto the Law of Righteousness.* To joyn Self with Christ in this Point, is as dangerous and destructive, as to set up Self against Christ. Thus (I say)

'twas with the Jews of old, and thus 'tis with the Papists now: But, my Beloved, if ever you would pitch your Faith aright upon Christ, you must not once think of thus compounding the business between Him and Self; but Christ must be all in all: We must shut our eyes against all other things in Point of Justification, and must go forth singly and nakedly to Christ, venturing our eternal All upon the alone bottom of his everlasting Righteousness. 'Tis *Calvin*'s observation upon the place last quoted, That *the foundation of, or first step towards our obtaining an interest in the Righteousness of God, is for a man to renounce and go out of his own Righteousness.* Thus, I am sure, *Paul*'s Faith chose and embraced Christ, *Phil.* 3.7, 8, 9. *Those things which were gain to me,* (saies he) *those I counted loss for Christ; yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.* Pray mark, his Faith here chuses and embraces Christ for his Righteousness and Justification, and herein he joyns nothing with him; he pitches singly and nakedly upon Christ alone, renouncing all other things whatever; he had as much of his own to

Justitia Dei obtinendæ principium est, abdicare se propriâ justitiâ. Calv.

have

have lean't & depended upon in this point, as any meer man that ever lived, since sin entered the World; for, in Priviledges, in Graces, in Services, and in Sufferings for Christ, (I am apt to think) he excelled all meer men; but yet he rests on none of these, no nor so much as joyns any thing of it with Christ, but rejects and renounces all, and that with the greatest loathing and detestation in the point of Justification, cleaving singly and nakedly to Christ alone: sayes he, *I account all but loss, yea dung*, that is, as the most vile and loathsome thing; and I would not be found in it for a thousand Worlds. The truth is, to joyn any thing of our own with Christ in this business, is what excludes us from any share in Christ, or any benefit by Christ; so much the Apostle is express in *Gal.* 5. 2, 3, 4. *Behold, I* Paul *say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; for I testifie again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole Law: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace.* The sum of the Apostles design is to shew, that to joyn any thing of our own with Christ in the business of Righteousness and Justification, and not rest purely and entirely upon him, is what shuts us out from any part and lot in Christ, or any benefit

Loquitur de iis, quæ antea, adhuc inconversus, magnifecerat; & in iis justitiam salutiferam posuerat, nunc autem conversus ad Christum ea despicit, & ut sordes, & res vilissimas abjicit, tanquam ad salutem inutilia, imò perniciosa, si fiducia justitiæ in iis ponatur. Glass. Rhet. Sac.

and advantage by him; for pray observe, there were among the *Galatians*, some who did *miscere Christum cum Lege*, as *Calvin*'s expression is, *they did joyn the Law with Christ*, pressing and taking up Circumcision as a part of that Righteousness whereby they expected to be justified and saved: They were not so gross in their minds, (as that great Divine there observes) as to expect Salvation meerly by the observation of the Law, and their own Obedience; but they were for sharing the business between this and Christ: Now what sayes *Paul* to them, and by what does he labour to antidote the Believers among them against this great error? Why, (first) he tells them plainly, that if they will joyn either Circumcision, or any thing else of their own with Christ in this matter, then *Christ shall profit them nothing*, vers. 2. And he asserts the same thing, *vers.* 4. *Christ, sayes he, is become of no effect to you*; *i. e.* You shall have no part in Christ, no benefit by Christ; Christ is of no use, no benefit, no advantage to you no more than if he had never been: And indeed, as one observes upon the place, *Whoever is but for an half Christ in this business loses all of Christ.* (Secondly), He tells them, that if they will have any thing of their own to bear share with Christ in the matter of their Salvation, they are *Debtors to do the whole Law*: If they will have their obedience to the Law, to have any share in their acceptation with God, then they must keep the

Christum dimidium quisquis habere vult totum perdit. Calv.

the whole Law, for else all were nothing; 'Tis a great Speech of a Learned Interpreter upon these words, *Whoever*, sayes he, *is a Debtor to do the whole Law, can never escape death, because he will alwayes remain under guilt; for no one will ever be found, who will be able to fulfil or satisfie the Law, such an Obligation therefore is the certain damnation of the man that lies under it.* Thus you see, there must be nothing else of our own joyned with Christ in the matter of our Righteousness and Justification with God; but our Faith must cleave singly and nakedly to Christ alone: The truth is, Christ's Righteousness alone is sufficient to save and justifie the worst of sinners: 'tis *the Righteousness of God*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. and *the Righteousness of the Law*, Rom. 8. 3. A Righteousness every way adequate and commensurate to the strictest demands of Law and Justice, a Righteousness as long, as broad, as deep, as high, as the sin and guilt of the most Scarlet, Crimson Sinners can be; and why should any think of joyning any thing therewith? Truly so to do, is to reflect great dishonour upon it, and upon the Wisdom and Grace of God in ordaining it for our Justification and Salvation. And as we must joyn nothing with Christ in the matter of Righteousness and Justification, so neither must we joyn any thing with him in the matter of our Sanctification

Qui debitor est totius legis faciendæ, mortem nunquam effugiet; quia semper manebit sub reatu. Nemo enim unquam reperietur qui legi satisfaciat, talis igitur obligatio, certa est damnatio hominis. Id.

fication and Holiness: We should look for no Grace, no Holiness but what comes from him, and is wrought in us by him: Nor indeed will God own any thing for Grace and Holiness in us at last, that does not come from him: In all respects therefore let the language of your Souls be, O none but Christ, none but Christ.

4. Be sure that you chuse Christ and embrace him as your Rest and Happiness; and not only as one that is to bring you unto Rest and Happiness: Christ, my Beloved, is not only the way and means to bring men unto Happiness, but he also is himself their Happiness, and as such he is tendered to us, and should be chosen and embraced by us: *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, (saies he) *John* 14. 16. that is, as one glosses upon it, I am the Beginning, the Progress, and Perfection of a Christians Happiness: Sure I am, as Christ, considered as the Way, is the Means, and what leads us unto Happiness; so Christ, considered as the Life, is himself our Happiness, our supream Happiness; and indeed, we come to Christ as the Life, by Christ as the Way. Sweet is that saying which I have read in one of the Ancients on this place; *We, thy People*, (saies he, speaking to Christ) *do come by thee to thee, because thou art the Way, the Truth, and the Life; the Way in thy Example, the Truth in the Promise, the Life in the Reward:*

Nos populus tuus sequamur te, per te, ad te, quia tu es via, veritas & vita; via in exemplo, veritas in promisso, vita in præmio. Bern.

I

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: i. e. as another expounds it, *I am the onely right Way, the supream Truth, the true Life, the blessed Life, the increated Life.* And suitable hereunto is *Calvin*'s observation upon these words, *The sum*, sayes he, *of this Sentence is this, He, whoever he be, that obtains and possesses Christ, can want nothing: whoever therefore is not content with him alone, aspires after something beyond the ultimate and highest perfection.* And then he concludes thus, *If any one turns aside from Christ, he can do nothing but err; if any one does not rest in him, he else-where feeds upon nothing but wind and vanity: If any one makes out after any thing beyond him, he will find Death instead of Life.* O there are infinite Beauties, Delights, and Perfections in Christ, whereby he is able to fill and satisfie us, and make us happy: And for my own part, as I desire never to be happy, if Christ be not able to bring me to happiness, so I desire no better or greater happiness than what Christ is, or can be to me. O, there's all in him, all to fill, all to comfort, all to delight and ravish, all to solace and satisfie the largest faculties of eternal Souls. *May I have but Christ*, sayes *Rutherford*, *I shall think my self*

Ego sum via rectissima, veritas suprema, vita vera, vita beata, vita increata. Tho à Kemp. lib. 3. de imitat. Christi.

Summa hujus sententiæ est, quisquis potitur Christo, nihil illi deesse: idioque ultra ultimam perfectionem eniti quisquis eo uno contentus non est. Et siquis a Christo deflectat, nihil poterit quam errare; siquis in eo non acquiescat, nihil quam vento & vanitate alibi pascetur: Siquis ultra eum tendat, mortem vitæ loco inveniet. Calv. in loc.

as well Heaven'd as any whatever. Truly he, and he alone is *centrum quietativum*, as the Schools ſpeak, the quieting, reſting center of the Soul. And ſo the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *Pſal.* 116. 7. Indeed he in his preſence, and our enjoyment of him, is Heaven and Happineſs: 'Tis the higheſt happineſs which Chriſt promiſes his People here, *Joh.* 14. 21. and 'tis the higheſt happineſs which his People reckon upon, or hope for hereafter. *Phil.* 1. 23. Anſwerable whereunto is the Obſervation of one upon thoſe words of Chriſt to the Thief upon the Croſs, Luke 23. 43. *This day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe: With me,* (ſayes he) *O wonderful goodneſs! he does not ſay ſimply, thou ſhalt be in Paradiſe, or thou ſhalt be with Angels; but thou ſhalt be with Me, thou ſhalt be ſatisfied with him whom thou deſireſt.* Thus Chriſt is the Reſt and ſupream Happineſs of Souls; and accordingly our Faith ſhould chuſe and embrace him: I will not ſay, there is not true Faith, where the Soul does not come up to ſuch a choice of Chriſt, as this is; But this I'le ſay, That though Faith at firſt may not thus chuſe Chriſt; yet afterwards, as it grows up more towards perfection, it does come to chuſe Chriſt under this notion: And the more diſtinct it is in chuſing Chriſt, as the ſupream Reſt and Happineſs of the Soul, the more compleat and perfect it is. Faith's language

Mecum eris in Paradiſo; mecum inquit, mira benignitas, non dicit ſimpliciter, eris in Paradiſo, vel cum Angelis eris; ſed mecum eris, ſatiaberis eo, quem deſideras. Bern. de Paſſ. Dom.

language to Chriſt, when come to any maturity, is ſuch as this; Lord, as all my Life is in thy Death, all my Healing in thy Wounds, all my Righteouſneſs in thy Obedience; ſo all my Happineſs is in thy Preſence, all my Heaven in the boſom and embraces of thy Love: Nor *have I any in Heaven but thee, neither is there any upon earth that I deſire beſides thee*, Pſal. 73. 25. O thus chuſe Chriſt! chuſe him as the Reſt, the Solace, the Happineſs of your Souls, and never think of any thing elſe to be the leaſt part of your Happineſs beſides Chriſt.

5. Be ſure that you chuſe and embrace Chriſt with his Croſs, and not onely Chriſt with his Crown; Chriſt crucified, as well as Chriſt glorified; Chriſt upon terms of ſuffering for him, as well as reigning with him, he calling thereunto: Thus alſo Chriſt tenders himſelf to us, and thus muſt he be choſen and embraced by us, *Mat.* 16. 24. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, take up his Croſs, and follow me*: And *Luk.* 14. 27. *Whoſoever doth not bear his Croſs, and come after me, cannot be my Diſciple.* Some are for Chriſt, and his Crown, but they ſtick at his Croſs: They are for a reigning Chriſt, but not for a perſecuted Chriſt: But, my Beloved, if you would ſo chuſe him, as to be married to him, you muſt chuſe him as upon the Croſs Crucified, as well as upon the Throne Glorified: The meaning is, you muſt chuſe him with a firm reſolution to ſuffer for

him

him, if he calls you hereunto; you must chuse him as one persecuted and distressed on Earth, as well as one dignified and glorified in Heaven: In a word, you must chuse him for better for worse, in all estates and conditions, with all his Inconveniences, as well as his Priviledges, with his Poverty, his Imprisonments, his Reproaches, his Deaths, his Dangers, his Conflicts, and the like: that is to say, you must chuse him with a willing resolution of mind to undergo all this at his call, and for his sake; and this indeed is to close with him in his own way, and upon his own terms: Christ's language to the Soul, in the tender of himself to him, is such as this; Soul, I am willing to be espoused to thee, I am willing to bestow my self, with all my Riches and Fulness upon thee; but if thou will have me and these, thou must be content to suffer for me, to be reproach'd, to be persecuted, to be imprisoned, yea, to be *killed all the day long* for me, when I please to call thee thereunto: And indeed Faith, when right, closes with him upon these terms: Content, sayes the Soul, being acted by a true Spirit of Faith, Christ upon any terms that he thinks fit, Christ with the Cross, Christ with Reproach, with Imprisonment, with Death, with whatever he pleases rather than go without him: And indeed we need not be scared, nor terrified at the Cross; for there is no Cross so bitter as Christ is sweet; there is nothing we can

suffer

suffer for Christ, that is worthy to be compared with the Glory we shall have in Christ, and with Christ: Besides, Christ is worthy to be suffered for; and therefore welcome Christ, and welcome his Cross too: Truly, my Beloved, Christ's Cross is sweet, very sweet, as he makes it: That sweet-smell'd and perfum'd Cross of Christ, sayes one, is accompanied with sweet refreshments, with the Kisses of a King, with the Joy of the Holy Ghost; therefore feare not at it, but chuse him with his Cross as well as his Crown.

6. Be sure that you chuse Christ often, and think it not one single Act or Work onely to chuse and embrace him: If you would indeed make sure of Christ, and an espousal to him, you should chuse him and embrace him anew every day. We are apt to look upon the Work of chusing and embracing Christ, as one single Act or Work onely; but, my Beloved, 'tis a Work that should be often repeated: by often repeating of it we should grow more sound, more strong, more distinct in it: As a second Edition corrects the Errors of the first, so after Acts of believing in this kind do supply the defects of the first Act: Indeed my advice to you is, that you would make as much conscience of chusing and embracing Christ afresh every day, as of praying every day; especially if you be either young beginners in believing, or older believers under clouds and darkness. St. *Paul* made fresh choices of Christ to the very last,

Phil.

Phil. 3. 8, 9. And 'tis the duty of them that do believe to believe: *These things write I unto you,* sayes St. *John, that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God,* 1 John 5. 13. They did believe, and he would have them to believe afresh every day; and so would I have you do, every day renew the first great Act of Faith in your closing with Christ, so shall every day be a day of espousals between Christ and you; and so by degrees shall you come to the sense and comfort of this espousal. I have read of some who never came to a sight and sense of their Union with Christ till they took this course. Thus I have now shewn you the way how you may come to be espoused to Christ, as well as what an Husband he is, what great things he does for his Spouses, and how much his Heart is set upon an espousal with sinners: Now will you take this course? Or shall all be lost with you? Possibly the whole will have a different effect upon those that read or hear these things: Some, I hope, will be won and gained to Christ by them; others, I fear, will reject and despise all, and that either out of a spirit of profaneness, or insensibility of their need of, and concernedness in these things: If any Soul shall reject them out of a spirit of profaneness, I would say to such a Soul, as *Solomon* to the Scorner, *Prov.* 9. 12. *If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it*; thou alone shalt bear all thy sins, and all the wrath and vengeance of God due to them; If any

shall reject these things out of a Spirit of insensibility of their need of, and concern in them, their case is the more to be pitied; for the more insensible they are of their misery without Christ, the greater is that misery of theirs. *What more miserable*, sayes *Austin*, *then for a miserable man not to commiserate himself?* Others, it may be, stand doubting and trembling, daring neither to reject, nor yet to embrace: not reject, because their need of Christ is so great, the worth of Christ so eminent, and the guilt of the rejection of Christ so black; nor yet embrace, because their sins are so many, and their unworthiness so great. To such I would say, cease thy trembling, and delay thy close with Christ no longer; it has been thy sin, let it be thy shame and sorrow that thou hast neglected and refused Christ so long, saying with *Austin*, *I have loved thee too late, O thou so ancient and yet so new a beauty, I have loved thee too late.* And for thy encouragement, I would say to thee, as the Servant did to his Lord upon such an occasion as this, *Luke* 14. 22. *Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.* Though many sinners, and great sinners have been received to mercy, yet still there is room for thee, and for all that have a mind to Christ; There is room in Christ's Heart, there is room in Christ's Arms, there is room in his Covenant, there is room in

Quid miserius misero non miserante seipsum? Aug.

Serò te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua & tam nova, serò te amavi. Aug.

his Kingdom, there is room upon his Throne with his Father for thee: But if yet any shall reject this offer of Love, and persist so to do, such will at last find, that there is room in Hell, room in the infernal Pit, room in the place of torment for them: Therefore as Life and Death are once more set before you, so I beseech you to chuse Life and not Death, that you may live for ever.

CHAP. XI.

Being a contemplation of the infinite Love and Condescension of Christ to Souls, and the unspeakable Comfort and Happiness of Believers in this sweet Espousal.

IN the view of all that has been hitherto declared, we may well take up an admiring contemplation of Christ's Love and Condescention, and Believers Comfort and Happiness; the one and the other being exceeding great and glorious: O! for Christ to marry poor Souls to himself, and for poor Souls to be married to Christ, how great is the Love of the one, and the happiness of the other herein!

1. How great is the Love and Condescention of Christ in marrying Souls to himself! Next to his becoming Man, and dying for them, Wherein can he testifie greater Love and

and Condescention to them than in this? There are, among many others that might be mentioned, that will argue his Love and Condescention herein to be wonderful and glorious, two things. One is the infinite disparity and disproportion between the Parties, Him and Them; the other is the unspeakable nearness and gloriousness of that Union and Relation which he takes them into with himself: Both which I desire you to contemplate.

1. Contemplate the infinite disparity and disproportion between him and them: What proportion is there between a King and a Beggar? What proportion is there between an Ant and an Angel; yea, between the smallest Worm, and all the Angels in Heaven? Infinitely less proportion is there between Christ and sinners; and yet he espouses them to himself: What shall I say? He is both High and Great, we are base and vile; He is Blessed and Glorious, we are wretched and despicable. He is a Great King, we are poor slaves and vassals; yea, the worst of slaves and vassals, being the slaves and vassals of Sin and Satan: And to sum up all in a few words; He is God, and we are Creatures; yea, he is an infinitely pure and holy God, and we are unspeakably impure and unholy Creatures: O how great is the disproportion! and yet he marries us to himself: What proportion is there between God and the Creature? The Creature at best is but a small drop of Being; but God is *Mare essen-*

di, a Sea, a Fountain, an Ocean of Being: The Creature is and has but a little good; but, *Deus est Bonum infinitissime infinitum*, as *Bradwardin* speaks of him, *God is a most infinitely infinite Good*: The Creature is a depending thing, the Being of the Creature is a depending Being, the very nature of the Creature lies much in dependance; but God is an absolute and independent Being, he being of himself, and from himself; indeed *all other things are of him, and from him, and to him*, as the Scripture speaks. Now for God to marry the Creature, and espouse the Creature to himself; O what love, what condescention is this! and yet greater love than this does Christ shew; For what proportion is there between an infinitely Holy God, and universally sinful, defiled, and polluted Creatures? The distance between God and us, as we are Creatures, is great; but the distance between the infinitely Holy God and us, as sinners, is in some sort unspeakably greater: 'Tis our duty, and should be our joy to know and keep our Creature-distance with God; we should rejoyce to think that God is so infinitely above us; but 'tis our misery, and we should tremble to think of, our sinful distance from God, that distance I mean that sin is, and has caused between God and us: Now for an Holy God to espouse sinful Creatures to himself; yea for a God so infinitely Holy to espouse Souls, who are so utterly sinful, to himself, as the best of us all by nature are; this is greater love and condescention

Esse creaturæ est esse dependens.

scention still. *O wonderful commerce!* (sayes one of the Ancients, speaking of Christ's dying for his People) *the King dies for the Servant, God for Man, the Creator for the Creature, the innocent for the nocent.* The like may I say here; O wonderful condescention! The King marries a Slave, God the Creature, the pure and holy One polluted and defiled sinners: True indeed, he makes them Saints by and upon his marrying of them, but he finds them sinners when he first makes it a time of love to them: O adore this Love, this Condescention!

O vere admirabile commercium! tradit se Rex pro Servo, Deus pro Homine, Creator pro Creatura, innocens pro nocente. Bern. de pass. Dom.

2. Contemplate the unspeakable nearness and gloriousness of that Union and Relation which he takes them into with himself; as the distance and disproportion between the Parties is infinitely great, so the Union and Relation he takes them into, is very near and glorious: The Union between the Vine and Branches is near; the Union and Relation between the Head and Members is near; the Union and Relation between the Husband and Wife is near; but all these are but shadows and representations of that Union and Relation which Christ takes Believers into with himself, which must therefore be nearer and greater than all: 'Tis indeed (as upon occasion has been before declared) next for intimacy and glory, to the essential and personal Union; yea, it comes so near the highest Union of all, the Union that is be-

tween the Father and the Son, as that it is set forth in Scripture by the same expressions that that Union is, *viz.* *By being and dwelling in each other*: Yea, Christ himself seems to bring it so near that great Union, as that he makes that the pattern of it, and accordingly prayes for it for his People, *Joh.* 17. 21. *Neither pray I for these alone, but them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* Pray mark, he prayes for the accomplishment of this Union for them, as the top and perfection of all their happiness; and not only so, but as that which comes as near the great Union between his Father and Himself, as can well be conceived. 'Tis a sweet saying which one of the Ancients has upon these words of Christ; *What more glorious*, sayes he, *than this Union? What further or higher, poor Soul, canst thou either have, or desire to have than this, thou shalt be one with thy Bridegroom? O happy, exceeding happy, yea, of all others most happy Union!* In a word, nearer than this Creatures can't well be taken into Christ, nor can they have a greater glory put upon them, then there is put upon them in their being taken into this Union & Relation to him: how great therefore must the love and condescention of Christ herein to Believers be? O for him to take such so near himself, as

Unum in nobis; sicut tu & ego unum sumus: Quid hac Unitate gloriosius? Quid ultra vel optare poterit, vel habere? unum cum sponso tuo eris, O felix, felicior, imò omnium felicissima unitas! Bern.

as to make them one with him, to lay them in his bosom, to communicate himself to them! This is love indeed, and this we should contemplate and admire.

2. How great is the comfort and happiness of Believers, in being thus married and espoused to Christ? We say of such or such a Woman that is well married, that she is well disposed of, and is very happy in an Husband: But, O Soul, how well art thou disposed of, who art disposed of to Christ? And how happy art thou in an Husband who art married to him? What, Soul, married to Jesus, to sweet Jesus, to lovely Jesus, to Jesus the Son of God! O what sweet, what strong consolation may this be to thee! and how should it fill thy heart with holy triumph and exultation for ever! This alone may comfort thee in all the difficulties and troubles of Life, and in all the conflicts and agonies of Death. Cast thine eye back on the nature of this Espousal, and what an Husband Christ is, and what great things he does for his Spouses, as the one and the other of them has been declared; and then judge of thine own happiness, in being taken into this Relation to him! In *Cant.* 6. 9. 'tis said concerning the Spouse of Christ, *Thus the Daughters saw Her, and blessed Her; yea, the Queens and the Concubines, and they praised Her:* They look't upon Her to be the most happy on Earth: And truly, Soul, when I look upon thee, as the Spouse of Christ, I can't but in like manner bless and praise thee;

and thou thy self mayst well bless thy self, and say, Blessed be the day that ever I was born, blessed be the Womb that bare me, and blessed be the Paps that gave me suck! But yet to raise this comfort and happiness of thine a little higher, that thou mayest rejoyce in thy Lot, the lines being fallen to thee in pleasant places, consider three things;

I. Consider, that this Relation of thine to Christ, gives thee a full interest in him, and all that is his: This the Spouse much gloried and rejoyced in, as her Crown and Happiness; therefore she is frequently up with it in a way of holy boasting, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, Cant. 2.16. And again, *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine*, Chap. 6.3. Being espoused to Christ, Christ is thine; and Christ being thine, his Blood is thine, his Righteousness is thine, his Love is thine, his Fulness is thine, the Fruit of all his Sufferings, the Vertue of all his Offices, the Sweetness of all his Relations is thine: Christ being thine, all is thine, all the promises are thine, all the Ordinances are thine, Life is thine, Death is thine, Time is thine, Eternity is thine, Things present are thine, Things to come are thine, 1 *Cor.* 3, 22. O what a goodly Heritage hast thou! and how should thy Soul bless the Lord, that ever he drew thee into this Union and Relation to him? What a spring of comfort may this be to thee in all conditions? *Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed*: Why? *For thy Maker is thy Husband*, Isa. 54.4, 5. The truth is, though possibly

ſibly thou mayeſt have little of this World, yet in having Chriſt thou haſt all thou needſt and art capable of to make thee happy for ever.

II. Conſider, that this Union and Relation of thine to Chriſt remains firm and ſtedfaſt for ever: And O what ſweetneſs does this add unto it! True, may the Soul ſay, this Relation is a bleſſed Relation, and full of ſweetneſs and comfort; But will it hold? Yea, it will hold, and that for ever: the beſt comforts thou enjoyeſt here below, will ſhortly have a period, and the ſweeteſt Relations thou ſtandſt in here, will after a while be diſſolved and broken; but thy Union and Relation to Chriſt will laſt for ever, that can never be diſſolv'd: *I will betroth thee unto me*, ſayes God, *yea, I will betroth thee unto me*: but Lord for how long? (may the Soul ſay) why, *for ever*, ſayes God, *Hoſ.* 2. 19. O that word for ever! this puts an infinite ſweetneſs into this Relation of thine: This one word *for ever* (as one obſerves upon this place) makes a miſery, though but ſmall in it ſelf, an infinite miſery; and a mercy, though but ſmall in it ſelf, even an infinite mercy: How much more does it make that which in it ſelf is ſo great as thy Union and Eſpouſal to Chriſt is, ſweet and deſirable?

O but, ſayes the Soul, never was there ſuch a wretch as I am; never did any carry it towards Chriſt as I do: True, he has made love to me, and I have ſome hopes that I have cloſed up with him in a Marriage-Covenant;

nant; but alas, never was there such a rebellious, revolting, backsliding heart as mine is; I am ever playing the Harlot, and going a whoring from him; by means of which, I fear, he will break Union and Communion with me, and at last cast me off. I answer, Truly Soul, this is very sad, and thou shouldst lie low in the dust in the sense of it; yet, to encourage thee against thy fears, consider three things.

1. Consider, that Christ is not forward to take advantage against Souls for their failings and breakings with him: He is not *strict to mark what is done amiss*, Psal. 130. 3. He is not prone to cast off, and *to put away*, no 'tis what he *hates*, Mal. 2. 16. True, he may, and many times does withdraw from us, and frown upon us; but putting away he loves not; yea, he pities and spares us under our infirmities, and his Bowels are mov'd for us.

2. Consider, that before ever Christ made love to thee, and took thee into this Relation with himself, he knew perfectly what manner of one thou wouldst be, and how thou wouldst carry it towards him; and yet all could not hinder him from shewing this favour to thee: Why then shouldst thou think he will cause him to break with thee now? The Soul may be apt to say, Did Christ think I would be such a Wretch, that I would so grieve him, so offend him, that I would carry it so unworthily towards him under all his love as I do? Yea, Soul, Christ thought it, yea, he knew it perfectly before-hand, in

Deut. 31. 21. 'tis said, *That God knew what Israel would do before-hand*: So Christ knew before-hand how thou wouldst slight his Love, grieve his Spirit, violate his Laws; he knew, how thou wouldst offend and affront him, by a proud, vain, wanton behaviour before him; He knew, how thou wouldst backslide, and go a whoring from him; and had he not seen and known that he had love enough, and bowels enough to cover and pass by all, he would never have made love to thee: Hence, when he *betroths*, he is said to do it *in judgment*, Hos. 2. 19. Christ knew what he did, and what an one he married, when he married thee to himself: And as all could not hinder his love at first, so neither shall it take off his love from thee now.

3. Consider, that thou mayest have many failings and miscarriages, be guilty of many breakings with Christ, and departures from him; and yet the Marriage-Covenant between him and thee not be broken; A Woman may be guilty of many failings and miscarriages, many defects and misdemeanors, and yet all not break the Marriage-Covenant between her Husband and her; And so here; O how sweet is that Scripture! Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34. *If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I visit their iniquities with a rod, and their transgressions with stripes*; And what follows? *Nevertheless*, saves he, *my loving kindness will I not utterly*

utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Pray mark, Christ's People may sin, and sin greatly, and he may sharply chastise them for their sins; yea, he may seem to take away his loving kindness from them, and may really for a time suspend the influences and manifestations thereof; but his Covenant-love and faithfulness to them, that remains firm and stedfast to them for ever notwithstanding all. So again, *Jer.* 3. 1, 14. *Though thou hast played the Harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord. Turn, O back-sliding Children, for I am married unto you.* Mark, though they had backsliden, though they had played the Harlot, though they had played the Harlot with many lovers, yet Christ owns his Covenant-Relation to them and with them; yea, and he sends, as it were, his Covenant after them, and by that fetches them home to himself. O! whatever thy miscarriages are, whatever thy breakings with Christ, and departures from him have been; yet, being once married to him, the Marriage-Union and Relation between him and thee remains firm and stedfast for ever notwithstanding all.

O but, sayes the Soul, my heart is still bent to backsliding from Christ, and I am afraid, I shall at last totally and finally depart from him, and then farewel all. I answer, That Christ stands engaged to keep thee from; true, notwithstanding any thing in

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and of thy self, if left by Christ, thou wouldst be apt totally and finally to depart from him; but Christ himself stands engaged to keep thee to him: 'Tis the very tenure of his Covenant with thee, *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, and I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall never depart from me.* O Sirs, not only is Christ's heart towards his People, but he is engaged by Covenant to keep their hearts close to him, and faithful with him; at least so far, as that they shall not totally depart from him; and so their faithfulness to him, does depend upon his faithfulness to them. I'le close this consideration with that known and great Scripture, *Rom.* 8. latter end, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us: for I am perswaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,* (and lest all these things should not reach the case of every Soul, he adds) *nor any other Creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

III. Consider, that 'tis not long e're the Lord Jesus, thy dear Husband, will come and consummate the Marriage between him and thy Soul: And O how sweet will this be?

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The Match here is but as it were begun between Christ and thee, but Christ will shortly come and consummate it: *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh*, Mat. 25. 6. And again, *they that were ready went into the Marriage*, ver. 10. and the *Marriage of the Lamb is come*, Rev. 19. 7. There is a time then, when Christ will come to consummate the Marriage between him and Souls: When he comes as to the World, he comes as a Judge to condemn them, to avenge the quarrel of his Gospel, the quarrel of his Covenant, the quarrel of his Blood, all which they have rejected, he comes to pass Sentence upon them for resisting his Spirit, for contemning his Grace, for breaking his Laws, for neglecting his Salvation: And O how dark will the day of his coming be to them? But now to his own Spouses, when he comes, he comes as a Bridegroom: And O how sweet will this coming of his be to them?

1. Then he will turn all your Water into Wine. *Joh. 2. beg.* we read, *That Christ being at a Marriage, he there turned Water into Wine.* And truly, Soul, when he shall come to consummate the Marriage between him and thee, he will turn all thy Waters of Affliction into the Wine of sweet Consolation to thee: He will turn thy Night into Day, thy Darkness into Light, thy Sorrows into Joys, thy Mourning into Dancing, thy Troubles into Rest, thy Conflicts into Triumphs, thy Labours into Reward, thy mournful Lamentations into joyful Halelujahs: Then will he fulfil

fulfil that Scripture to thee, *Rev.* 21. 4. *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.* Poor Soul, now thine eyes are full of tears; with holy *David*, *Thou goest weeping and mourning* (it may be) *all the day long*; but then *all tears shall be wiped off thine eyes*: Now thou art *in deaths often*, as the holy Apostle was; but then *there shall be no more death*: Now thou art full of sorrows, *thy dayes are spent in grief, and thy years in sighing*, but then there shall be *no more sorrow*; sorrow and sighing both shall flie away for ever: Now thou art full of pains, yea, as the holy Prophet of old complained, *Thou art pained at thy very heart*; in the sense of thy own Afflictions, and in the sense of the Churches Afflictions; in the sense of thine own sins, and in the sense of the Worlds sins, thou art pained at the very heart; but then there shall be *no more pain*: Now *thou sowest in tears*, but then *thou shalt reap in joy*: Now *thou goest forth weeping*, yet *bearing precious Seed*; then *thou shalt return rejoycing, bringing thy sheaves with thee*: Now thou art in a storm, a storm of Affliction, a storm of Temptation, a storm of Persecution, *thou art afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted*; it may be, as the Church sometimes was, *Isa.* 54. 11. But then he will *make thy storm a calm*, and so *bring thee into the desired Haven*, to allude to that *Psal.* 107. 30. Now the Devil and his messengers are buffetting of thee,

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and will give thee no rest; then they shall be all troden under foot, and thy Soul shall act one eternal triumph over them; saying, as she of old in her Song did, *O my Soul, thou hast trodden down strength.*

2. Then Christ will turn all thy blackness into beauty, all thy sinful deformity into perfect purity and holiness for ever; and this is much more sweet than the former: Alas! sayes the Soul, turn my Water into Wine, true that is sweet; but there is that which lies heavier upon me than all the troubles and afflictions in the World, and that is my sinful blackness and deformity; O this stained, polluted, defiled nature of mine! this fountain of sin and enmity against God that is within! this is that which is *the burthen too heavy for me to bear*: Well, for thy comfort know, that thy Husband, sweet Jesus, will come; and when he comes, he will turn thy blackness into beauty, thy sin into holiness; then *he will sanctifie thee, and cleanse thee, that he may present thee to himself a glorious Spouse, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, Ephes. 5. 26, 27. Poor Soul, thou hast now many stains, many spots, and those such as thou art apt sometimes to think, are not *the spots of Gods Children*: but then all these spots shall be wiped out, and thou shalt be without spot; yea, thou shalt not onely be without spot, but without wrinkle too: There may be

Ecclesiam esse gloriosam, non habentem maculam, neque rugam, est ultimus finis, ad quem perducimur per passionem Christi; unde hoc erit in statu patriæ, non autem in statu viæ. Aqui.

be wrinkles where there may be no ſpots, and theſe are blemiſhes: O but then thou ſhalt have neither ſpot nor wrinkle; thou ſhalt be perfectly freed from leſſer, as well as greater ſins; yea, thou ſhalt have neither ſpot nor wrinkle, nor any ſuch thing; nothing that looks like ſin, nothing that thou canſt ſuppoſe to be in the leaſt a blemiſh or defect; there ſhall not be the leaſt print or foot-ſtep of the old *Adam* (as one ſpeaks upon the place) left in thee, or upon thee, but thou ſhalt be altogether holy and without blemiſh: Chriſt will then perfectly fill thee with his own Spirit, beautifie thee with his own Image, deck thee with his own Ornaments, enamel and irradiate thee with his own Glory, for then he will make thee like himſelf, both in holineſs and happineſs, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. Poor Soul, now thou art groaning under a body of Sin and Death, under the unclean motions of ſin, the impure luſtings of the fleſh, the curſed impoſings of a baſe, vile, unbelieving heart, that is impoſing upon thee in every Duty, in every Condition, in every Relation: Now thou art peſtered with the ſpringings, buddings, bloſſomings, and ebullitions of luſt and corruption within thee; but when ſweet Jeſus comes, there ſhall be an end of all this: Chriſt he overlooks all this now, but then he will do it all away, and thou ſhalt ſhine with the perfection of beauty.

Significat nullum planè peccatum vel minimum futurum in corpore Eccleſiæ, nullumque veteris Adami veſtigium, ſed futuram eam totam glorioſam. Zanch. in loc.

3. Then Christ will solemnly present thee to his Father as his Spouse, in the presence of all his holy Angels: And O how glorious and joyful will this be! In *Gen.* 24. *last.* we read that *Isaac took Rebekah, and brought her into his Mothers Tent:* So when dear Jesus comes to consummate the Marriage between him and thee, he will, being attended with all his holy Angels, bring thee into his Fathers House, and will there present thee to him as his Spouse; saying, Father, here is my Spouse, here is one whom in the day of everlasting love thou gavest unto me, one whom I have redeem'd to my self by my Blood, and married to my self by my Spirit in the Gospel; this is he that I was made sin and a curse for; and though he was in his blood and gore, when I first made love to him; yet loe! now here he is spotless and faultless before thee: Father, own him as thy Sons Spouse, and delight in him for ever: O how sweet, how glorious will this be! Suppose some great Prince were married, and upon his Marriage should take his Spouse in his hand, and lead her into the Presence-Chamber of the King his Father, and there present her to him, to the end he might take notice of her as his Sons Spouse, and shew suitable respect and favour to her; what a sweet thing would this be? But alas! what is this to the presentation Christ will make of thee to his Father at his coming; *Who will then present thee faultless into the presence of his glory with exceeding joy?* Jude v. 24. When

David,

David, and the Elders of *Israel*, brought up the Ark from the House of *Obed-Edom*, 'twas *with great joy and shouting*, 1 Chron. 15. 25, 28. But O when Christ attended with all his holy Angels, shall bring, and present thee into the presence of his Father, what joy and shoutings will there then be? surely there will be great rejoycing on all hands; God the Father will greatly rejoyce, Christ the Son will greatly rejoyce, God the Holy Ghost will greatly rejoyce, the Angels will greatly rejoyce, thy Soul also will greatly rejoyce; God the Father will greatly rejoyce to see his Sons Spouse come home to him so richly deck't and adorn'd; Christ the Son will greatly rejoyce, that he has gotten his Spouse into his Arms and Bosom, never to part with her more; the Holy Ghost will greatly rejoyce to see his work in tying the Marriage-Knot between Christ and the Soul compleated; the Angels will greatly rejoyce, as being Friends both of the Bridegroom and Bride; and as partaking with them in the Marriage-Supper; and thou thy self wilt greatly rejoyce, in that now thy happiness is consummated, and that thou shalt for ever lie in the bosom and embraces of thy Husbands love: O how sweet, how glorious will this be!

4. Then Christ will lead thee into the Bride-Chamber, the Mansion he has prepared for thee in the Fathers House, where thou shalt dwell for ever in his presence, and sit down eternally with him and his Father at the Marriage-Feast: And O how sweet and

glorious will this be? Being thus beautified and presented to the Father, what now remains for thee, but to enter upon thy lot with all the Saints, and to possess the joynter Christ made thee in the day of thine espousal to him, even eternal Life and Glory with himself for ever? What now remains for thee, but to sit down in the full views of his Glory, the full visions of his Face, the full enjoyment of his Presence, the full embraces of his Bosom, the full incomes of his Love, and all for ever? Here in the day of espousal thou hast had some views of him, thou hast seen his back-parts; but then thou shalt *behold his glory* for ever: *Joh.* 17.24. *Here thou hast seen him through a glass darkly, but then thou shalt see him face to face*, thy visions of him shall be both full and immediate, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. Here there have been some intercourses of love and delight kept up between him and thee, thou hast had some of the kisses of his mouth, some embraces in his bosom; but then thou shalt have thy fill of his love, being sweetly immerst and swallowed up in the Ocean of it for ever: O how sweet will this be! When Christ and thy Soul have met in an Ordinance, how often hast thou said with *Peter*, *'tis good to be here?* And when he has given thee now and then a little taste of his love, how hast thou been ravish't with it, crying out with the Spouse, *thy love is better than Wine?* But O what will it be to enjoy all this in its fulness, and that without the least moments interruption for ever? When Christ

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and thy Soul shall meet, not in a Duty or Ordinance only, but in Heaven in the Fathers House: All thou hast here of him, is but now and then a kiss of his Mouth, now and then a tast, a visit, a descent of his Grace and Love; and yet this is sweet, and makes a little Heaven in thy Soul: but when he comes to consummate the Marriage, then thou shalt have everlasting embraces, and uninterrupted pourings out of love from him; then no more veilings of his Face, no more withdrawings of his Presence, no more suspensions of his Love from thee, but thou shalt sit down in the full enjoyment of all for ever: Then no more need of Love-Letters to pass between Christ and thy Soul, for then there will be full and immediate embraces for ever; Therefore rejoyce in thy Lot, and say with the Church in a way of triumph, *Isa.* 61. 10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath cloathed me with Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with a Robe of Righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with Ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her self with Jewels.*

But may some doubting Soul say; True, here's comfort enough, and happiness enough for all Christ's Spouses; and were I assured of my espousal to him, I should think it enough to carry me through both Life and Death with comfort; but I am afraid I have neither part nor lot in this matter. I answer, If thou art one that lov'st thy sins and liv'st in them; if thou art one that alloweſt of,

and

and indulgest thy self in thy lusts, yea, in any known lust or sin, be it small or great, then thou hast too great ground for such fears; for I must tell thee, that the Spouses of Christ are of another disposition, they hate Sin, and love Holiness, and do what in them lies, to flie the one, and pursue after the other. But I will at present look upon thee to be a poor doubting Spouse of Christ that makest this complaint, and so shall leave a double word of encouragement with thee as to this, and thereby put a conclusion to this Matter.

1. I would speak to thee, as *Samuel* sometimes did to *Saul* in another case, *viz.* when *Saul* told him *that he had performed the Commandment of the Lord*: *If so, sayes* Samuel, *what then means this bleating of the Sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the Oxen which I hear?* 1 Sam. 15.13,14. So, if thou hast indeed no part or lot in Christ, and wert never espoused to him; then (first) what means the bleedings, mournings, and lamentings of thy Soul, under the sense of thy distance and estrangement from Christ, and thy utter unsuitableness to him both in Spirit and Life? *Blessed are they that thus mourn, for they shall be comforted*, Mat. 5.4. (2ly) What means thy high valuations of him, & the vehement hungerings and thirstings of thy Soul after him? *Blessed are they that hunger & thirst after righteousness for they shall be satisfied*, Mat. 5.6. (3ly) What means the holy tremblings of thy Soul in the thoughts of sinning against him, thy

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care and sollicitude to please him, thy fear to offend him? 'Tis the Character of a loyal Wife, that *her care is to please her Husband*, and not to offend him, *1 Cor.7.24.* (4thly) What means thy sensibleness of, and mourning under the dishonours of Christ, with the longings of thy Soul after his exaltation? *The reproaches of them that reproach him do fall upon thee*, Psal.69.9. 'Tis the true Spirit of a loyal Spouse to be concerned for her Husbands Concernments. These, and many more such gracious dispositions as are found in thee, do speak comfortably to thy Soul in this case; though still I would have thee press after the clearest evidences, and the fullest assurance of thine espousal to him.

2. Suppose the worst; yet for thy encouragement, I would speak to thee as the Disciples to the blind man, *Mark 10.49. Be of good comfort, arise, Christ calleth thee*; he calls thee into these blessed espousals with himself: And O that thou wouldest do, as that blind man there did, *who arose, and came to Jesus*; and assure thy self of this, his Arms are wide open to receive thee: truly, whoever, or whatever thou art that makest this complaint, whether Spouse or no Spouse, thy proper and immediate work is, now to close with Christ in a Marriage-Covenant: For pray mark, the work of a convinced sinner, and of a doubting beclouded Saint, is the same here; the one, as well as the other, is to believe and close with Christ, as if he had never done it before: Suppose then the worst, even that

thou

thou were never as yet espoused to Christ; yet do not despond, but let this be a day of espousal between him and thee, casting thy Soul upon him, not questioning his readiness to receive thee: For thy encouragement, I would say to thee as one of the Ancients speaks in the same case, *Why stickest and staggerest thou in thy self? Cast thy self upon him, and fear not, he will not withdraw himself so as to let thee fall; cast thy self upon him, resting secure and confident, that he will receive and save thee.* Thus I have now done; Saint, Spouse of Christ, what remains, but that thou love, reverence, and obey thy Lord and Head, living a life of dependance upon him, as also of louging expectation of his coming to consummate the Marriage between him and thee? What remains, but that thou shouldest take up the words of the Apostle, making the same inference from thine espousal to Christ, that he does from the dissolution of all things, saying in thy own name, and others, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11, 12. *What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God.* Sinner, what remains for thee to do, but to give up thy Name and Soul to Christ in a Marriage-Covenant, and be happy for ever? I will conclude all with those words, *Rev.* 19. 9. *Blessed are they which are called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.*

Quid in te stas & non sas? Projice te in illum, noli metuere, non se subtrahet ut cadas, projice te securus, excipiet te, & sanabit te. Aug.

Soli Deo Gloria.